

THE
R E C L U S E :
OR,
H I S T O R Y
OF
LADY GERTRUDE LESBY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

DEDICATED (BY PERMISSION)

TO HER GRACE
THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.

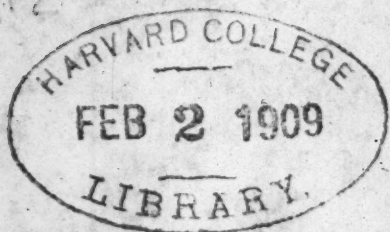
By Miss ESTHER FINGLASS.

V O L. II.

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THE
RECLUSE:

O R,
HISTORY
O F
LADY GERTRUDE LESBY.

LETTER XXV.

IN CONTINUATION.

WE set off for London in a few days after ; there was a vast number of my acquaintance in town, who received me like one arisen from the dead. I was pestered with questions ; and was ob-

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liged

liged to affect a flow of spirits, to answer or put off their different enquiries.—Lady Frances came to visit me as soon as she heard of my arrival.—Her presence was like that of an envenomed serpent.— I received her politely, but with a coolness that must have been visible, if she thought proper to understand it.

By launching into every gay science that presented itself, to drown recollection in a round of dissipation, I gained an outward look of composure, while the seeds of reflection were sunk too deep in my heart, ever to be eradicated. I had soon a crowd of lovers in my train; my fortune being so considerable was their principal

principal object ; for had I beauty, wit, and merit to boast of, they would have been overlooked by the selfish herd, if Plutus had not showered his favours. Conscious of this, I despised their professions and sickened at their flattery. I grew tired of the hurry and confusion I was constantly engaged in, and longed to return to my lonely retreat, where I could indulge my gloomy ideas without interruption. Miss Manly, who left the country merely to oblige me, readily acquiesced in my wish for returning.

We were welcomed by Mr. Manly and my aunt on our return, with more sincerity than we experienced since our departure from them.

Five years now elapsed in which nothing remarkable happened, but that for three years Mr. Hastings did not draw on Mr. Pultney for his income. At that time I received a letter from Mr. Pultney which contained an account of Hastings's death, which he learned from a Mr. Manzel, who just arrived in Italy; he had been intimate with him at Jenoa two years before, and soon after he quitted it he received an account of his death. This news roused all those painful emotions that were just beginning to subside, for my two friends, Mr. Manly and his sister, omitted nothing that could contribute to restoration of my peace. But one moment put to flight what tranquillity I had been for years labouring

labouring to gain; my grief returned with redoubled violence; life became hateful to me, and I passed some weeks in a state little short of distraction. Miss Manly, who never left me, but by her kindness and attention, prevented me from committing some act of desperation, when the first violence of my grief was somewhat abated, requested I would see Julia, of whom I received flattering accounts. I felt a repugnance at owning myself her mother, on account of the neglect I had hitherto treated her with. My friend strove to reason away all my objections, and I at length consented to go over to France, but not let Julia know in what degree I stood related to her. With this she seem-

ed satisfied; and nothing now retarded our journey but the precarious state of my aunt's health, for we expected her dissolution every day; and I could not think of leaving her in that state. She lingered seven months from the time we had determined on our journey; and it being then the beginning of winter, Mr. Manly having business in town, we determined to pass it in London, and to go over to France the beginning of Spring.

About this time I had received a letter from Sally, acquainting me, that she had removed to a convent at a greater distance from Paris, as several of the boarders had eloped with some English gentlemen,

gentlemen, and she thought it prudent to leave a place where Julia had been set so bad an example. Sally added, that she was remarkably tall of her age, which was twelve years; and the exactest description she could give of her person and face was, that she was a striking likeness of her father. This was the first time she ever mentioned him since we parted. I answered her letter directly. Told her I approved of what she had done; was glad Julia was the amiable girl she described, but took not the least notice of my intention of visiting her: for tho' I had given my word to Miss Manly, my resolution every day weakened, and I shuddered at the bare idea of seeing her.

Soon

Soon after our arrival in town, the general topic of conversation was a match that was speedily to take place between Sir Jasper Middleton's son and the Earl of F——'s eldest daughter. The young gentleman was on his travels, and they were to be married immediately after his arrival. The lady was extremely young, being scarcely sixteen. Her youth was her only recommendation, as she had the small pox at thirteen, which disfigured her in a shocking manner; and fame reported her as disagreeable in her temper, as she was ill-favoured in her person. Mr. Middleton was the reverse of the lady, being universally known to be a handsome, accomplished, amiable young man. Most of
those

those that conversed on the subject, pitied him for being obliged to marry such a piece of petulence and deformity; for he durst not disobey his father, whose pride lay in being allied to a family of distinction; for her fortune was not considerable, the earl having many younger children. But Sir Jasper chose to gratify his pride at the expence of his avarice; a passion he also possessed in no small degree; tho' master of a large fortune.

Miss Manly and I were one day on a visit, where the company was engaged in conversation concerning this marriage; there was a profusion of encomiums on the gentleman, and sarcasms on the lady.

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He was then expected every hour, and preparations making on both sides for his reception. I still kept up a kind of intimacy with Lady Frances, and paid her a visit next day. I congratulated her on her daughter's intended nuptials. She was in a remarkable good humour, owing, 'tis to be supposed, to the agreeable change that was to take place, and in the fulness of her heart, told me how exceedingly happy the disposing of her daughter so advantageously made her.—I shall at any rate be rid of her, added she, for her unhappy temper keeps the family in continual agitation; her father, whose favourite she unfortunately for me is, is wholly guided and directed by her machinations. I can scarcely command
my

my own servants. You may believe then, Lady Gertrude, I shall be happy at parting with her.—I agreed in what she said, and soon after took my leave. On my way homewards I could not help musing on the unhappy fate of the young gentleman that was designed for her victim.—Her mother, said I, has been the cause of all my misery: she has brought innumerable afflictions on me, and feels no regret for the woes she has occasioned. She would now, merely to get rid of an object that is disagreeable to her, render an amiable man miserable for life, that never injured her. A thought struck me—I durst not indulge it.——And why shall I not prevent a worthy man from being unhappy
for

for life. My griefs have nearly exhausted me, I shall not long survive to prevent him from enjoying his liberty, then I shall have ample revenge on Lady Frances, as the affront will be public; and therefore more severely felt by her.

LET.

LETTER XXVI.

IN CONTINUATION.

THE moment I got home, I went to Miss Manly's room, and acquainted her with the project I had conceived. She looked surprised—Think on Julia! said she; you seem to have forgotten her.—Ah! my dear friend, I durst not see her; the sight of her would kill me; her father's image. Besides, she must detest one who has acted more like a tyrant than a parent; she must abhor the banisher of her father. To save this young man from a life of certain misery, may be some atonement for my errors.—Marry him to your daughter,

ter, she replied.—How, my friend, is that possible? returned I; consider my fame; could I now bear to have it blasted, which her presence in England would effectually do?—It is in vain, I see, to argue with you, answered she; and do you really design to marry him?—If it be possible, said I; if Sir Jasper can be prevailed on to cancel the engagement. She looked displeased.—Do not condemn me, dear Miss Manly; only think on what affliction she has been the cause of to me, and blame me if you can, for endeavouring to mortify her.—And is that your only motive?—It is, upon my honour; rely on it, I'll never give you reason to despise me.—And pray how do you intend to act?—I'll
send

send Mr. Pultney to Sir Jasper, to make known my quality and fortune, only concealing my name until he agrees to the proposal.—How will you make this agree with your notions of punctilio?—Very easily; let Mr. Pultney, on whose prudence I can rely, into as much of my plan as is necessary; my behaviour, if I succeed, shall convince him and the world, that I had no other motive than to mortify the lady.—Well, you are a strange, inconsistent creature, she replied, and I see will do as you please; I wish you may not have reason to repent.—Of that, said I, I have no apprehensions; but will you accompany me to Mr. Pultney's? She agreed to this request. We immediately drove to his house,
and

and found him at home. I informed him of the business I came upon. He said he would wait on Sir Jasper next morning, and had not the smallest doubt of succeeding. I returned home well pleased with the hopes he gave me. He came next day to inform me, that Sir Jasper had received his proposal with pleasure, and had requested leave to wait on me. This I declined, until his son arrived in England.

I heard no more, except complimentary enquiries after my health, from Sir Jasper for near a fortnight; Mr. Middleton being detained by contrary winds, longer than was expected. When he arrived, I received a card from the
old

old gentleman, giving me notice of it, and compliments from the son, informing me, that he would do himself the honour of waiting on me next day. He came accordingly. I had never seen him before, and was much struck with his figure; he had a most engaging countenance, and was perfectly polite and well-bred. As there were but few forms to go thro', we were married in a short time after his arrival. Miss Manly, at my request, informed him, the day we were married, that my motive for marrying him was, to prevent his being forced to a match I heard he had a repugnance to; and that I was determined we should keep separate apartments. He expressed much surprise at the strangeness of the
the

the resolution ; but, finding by my friend's account, that I was determined, forbore to use any arguments against it.

We lived on the most friendly terms imaginable, and received a vast deal of company, who flocked to congratulate us on our nuptials. The earl of T——'s family raved at the affront that they had received ; for they became objects of public ridicule, and by that means gratified the darling passion of my soul. We remained in town until the latter end of May, and then set off to the country, accompanied by Mr. and Miss Manly, Lord William Gierſon, and a Miſs Parker. Mr. Middleton was an agreeable, entertaining companion, and

omitted nothing that could give me or his guests pleasure. At the period of five months, we again visited the metropolis. Mr. Middleton, engaged now in different parties from mine, no longer endeavoured to render himself agreeable. When we met, which happened but seldom, he treated me with a distant polite coolness, which hurt me extremely, as I thought him ungrateful for the favours I had liberally bestowed on him; but reflection in a short time convinced me I had nothing to accuse him of. I recollected my motive for marrying him, and, on deliberation, found he had nothing to thank me for; for much as I pitied him for the sacrifice he was about to make, it would not have induced

induced me to marry him, but for the means it gave me of repaying Lady Frances's friendship. This consideration determined me not to take notice of his altered behaviour, as I was conscious it was much better than I merited.

Mise Manly was obliged to leave us shortly after we came to town, to attend a relation, from whom she had great expectation. I was sorely grieved at parting with her, as she was the only person in whose bosom I could confide my griefs—griefs that never subsided, tho' they for some time lay dormant. When I was left alone, they returned with redoubled force, to which were added, many pangs for the last folly I committed; for I now viewed it
in

in a different light from what I did when my bosom glowed with a desire of revenge. That being, in part, gratified, I felt, that I paid too dear for the gratification; and was convinced, that my whole life was a continual repetition of inconsistencies, and I had been deliberately wrong

Sir Jasper Middleton, about this time, paid the debt to nature, by which event his son succeeded to his title and estate. His death gave me no concern, as he was a person for whom I never entertained the slightest esteem. Sir Charles having some business to transact down at his estate, requested I would give him my company. I excused, by saying I had

had promised Miss Manly to pass some time with her in Wales. He looked as if he would have been better pleased with my compliance, but made no reply.

We both set out on one day. Miss Manly had been in Wales some weeks before me, having left the lady she was visiting. I continued there two years without interruption. Miss Manly was then left a large fortune by the before-mentioned relation, which occasioned her to remove to Staffordshire. As I should be without any society that I liked when she was gone, I, at her earnest request, accompanied her. There was an estate about four miles distant from her's, called Abbyville. As it was pleasantly

pleasantly situated in a genteel neighbourhood, I wrote to Mr. Pultney, desiring him to treat with the disposer. I received an answer from him shortly after, acquainting me, that the purchase was forty thousand pounds. As I had intended to buy an estate for Julia, this being situated near Miss Manly's made it doubly agreeable. I immediately gave orders to purchase it, which was done; and, as the house was in good repair, I immediately came to live in it.

Miss Manly and I being near neighbours, visit each other by turns. Sir Charles has been but once to see me since I left London; but he writes frequently, and complains of my passion for the country.

try. The accounts I receive of Julia's being an elegant accomplished girl, would give me much satisfaction, was it not imbittered by hearing that she is miserable, by being ignorant of her parents situation. I have lodged thirty thousand pounds in the hands of Mr. Pultney, to be paid her on the day she comes of age; and this packet I commit to the care of Miss Manly, to be delivered to her after my death, which I am convinced will soon happen; and not till then must she know any thing of the unfortunate woman to whom she owes her being.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

IN CONTINUATION.

WHEN I wrote the foregoing part of my unhappy life, I did not imagine I should have any thing further to add, as I thought to pass my few remaining days undisturbed in this place, which I had chosen for my last retreat. A short time after I wrote it, I received a letter from Sally, informing me, that Julia went for a few days on a visit to the Marquis de Revelle's, with whose daughter she had contracted a friendship at the convent. On her return, she appeared more melancholy than usual, and kept weeping continually. Sally

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repeat.

repeatedly requested to know the cause, but received no other answer than a fresh shower of tears. Her grief at length began to prey upon her health, which alarming Sally, the one morning threw her arms round Julia's neck, and implored her, with tears, to inform her why she indulged such a flood of sorrow.—And can you, she replied, pretend ignorance of the cause of my sorrow; you who have it in your power, and will not relieve my mind? What crime have I committed in my infancy, that I should be drove an alien from my parents and my home, and kept in ignorance of who I am?—You have committed no crime, my dear child, replied Sally; be patient for a few days, and,

and, be the consequence what it may, I'll inform you of every thing you wish to know—Ah ! you have restored me to life, exclaimed the dear girl, (flinging her arms round Sally's neck, in a transport of joy) I shall now be happy—I shall find a relation in the most amiable of men. Sally requested of her to explain herself. She replied—The second day I had been at the Marquis de Revelle's, he received a letter, which put him and his lady in an ecstasy of joy. It was from a gentleman they had not seen for eleven years, but had received frequent accounts of his death. He was expected next day, and waited for by the whole family with the greatest impatience ; I, too, felt an impatience for his arrival I never

did on any account before. When the servant announced Mr. Greville, I directed my eyes towards the door; they were struck by the most graceful, elegant object that can be conceived, dressed in deep mourning. The Marquis flew to embrace him; and, after straining him some time in his arms, led him to his lady, who received him with no less marks of affection. They introduced him to their son and daughter, and then to me, as their particular friend. It is impossible to describe the emotions I experienced as he approached to salute me. I trembled so I could scarce stand. He led me to my chair, which I had involuntarily advanced some paces from, and took the next himself. We were
scarce.

scarce seated, when the marchioness and Olivia exclaimed at the same instant, "Heavens! what a likeness." The marquis and his son turned their eyes upon us, and betrayed, in their countenances, visible marks of surprise. Mr. Greville looked earnestly at me for some time; he seemed violently agitated, as he examined my countenance, and once opened his mouth to speak, but stopt suddenly, as tho' he had recollected himself. I was near fainting, and knew not how to account for it. Olivia seeing my distress, came and took hold of my arm—Come, Julia, let us take a walk. I arose and accompanied her, glad to be relieved. When we got a few paces from the house, she said she had a strong no-

tion, that Mr. Greville and I were relations. As I never told her I was ignorant of the circumstances of my birth, I answered, that I never heard of a person of that name being related to my family. She replied, that Greville was not his real name, but one he had assumed on his quitting France: that her father's first acquaintance with him was in Italy, where he was solicited to accept the hand of a lady of birth and fortune; but he excused himself, by pleading a prior engagement. He went to England soon after, but returned to France in a few months, seemingly very unhappy. My father, continued she, having brought my mother from Italy, where they were married, to reside in France,
met

met Mr. Greville, and prevailed on him to take up his residence with him. He remained with him three years, and then set off, after frequent invitations, for Italy, on a visit to the lady's brother whose hand he had rejected, she being married some time. When he had been gone some time, my father received a letter from him, informing him, that he was going to travel, and had changed his name to Greville. He wrote frequently for the space of a year and a half, and at the end of that time, the correspondence dropped, and he never heard from him since, until the letter arrived yesterday. You know now, added she, all I can inform you of ; for, tho' I often heard he had been unfortunate,

I never could learn particulars. A servant came to inform us dinner waited. During the course of the evening, I often caught Mr. Greville looking earnestly at me. I felt confused, tho' it gave me pleasure. He sighed frequently on turning his eyes from me; and, for my life, I could not forbear accompanying him. He took his leave early, and said he would not visit them again for some days, as he promised a gentleman, whom he had travelled with from Naples, to pass a short time with him at his country-house

When he was gone, the whole family pronounced us the perfect resemblance of each other; and declared there must be some consanguinity

sanguinity between us. I was silent, as, indeed, how could I be otherwise, ignorant as I am of my parents, and of every thing that concerns me? I have now acquainted you with the cause of my late grief; and with pleasure would I give up half my days, to be convinced I stood in the most distant relationship to him.

When she stopped, Sally was confounded at what she heard; she remembered perfectly the features of her father, and knew she bore a strong resemblance to him. She had heard of his death and my marriage; but this gentleman's story corresponding so exactly with his, put her in consternation

and doubt what judgment to form. However she begged of Julia to be composed, and assured her she would write to her parents, (who were such as she would have reason to be proud of) for leave to acquaint her with the particulars of her birth. Julia was in transport—Ah! she exclaimed, I shall no longer be tormented with vain fears; I shall see these dear parents my heart has long wished to behold! But why have they hitherto held me in contempt? May I hope to be received with that tenderness a dutiful child has a right to claim?—Certainly, my love, replied Sally, your parents will do justice to your merit and accomplishments; but let the matter rest here; I shall write instantly, and
hope

hope shortly to give that information you so impatiently long for. She kept her word, by sending me the foregoing particulars.

LET.

LETTER XXVIII.

IN CONTINUATION.

NO words can describe my feelings on reading this letter : 'Twas too much for my spirits to support. I sunk into fainting fits, which continued several hours. When I was sufficiently recovered to look at the letter, I again perused it; there was nothing I dreaded so much as their meeting again, as I doubted not that it was Hastings Julia met with, and judged if they saw each other again, all would be discovered. I wrote instantly to Sally, desiring her to hasten over with the greatest dispatch

dispatch and secrecy, and to discover nothing to Julia until they came. I directed her to Miss Manly's, and prepared that lady for their reception, who was happy at the resolution I had formed of seeing my child: for I did not acquaint her with my real motive for sending for her; however, she was prepared to receive her with pleasure.

They arrived some days sooner than was expected. Miss Manly had that day gone on a party of pleasure, and had no idea that her visitors would arrive in her absence. When they came to her house, and were informed she was abroad, Sally seemed uneasy, and said she had pressing business with her;

her; her house-keeper immediately desired her to come to me, as I was particularly acquainted with all her mistress's affairs. She accordingly took her advice, and desired the coachman to drive to Abbyville. I was dressing when they arrived. On being told they were strangers, I felt a trembling all over me, and would have given worlds to be freed from the necessity of seeing them, but there was no alternative; therefore I dismissed my attendants, took my salts, and strove to prepare myself for this dreaded interview. When I had gained, as I thought, a tolerable degree of composure, I went down stairs; the parlour door stood ajar, so that I came in unperceived by Julia, who stood at a window
that

that looked into the garden I stopped a moment to admire her fine form, as she stood with her back to me, but when she turned round (on Sally's advancing to pay her respects) and discovered to me the direct image of my beloved Hastings, I uttered a loud scream, and sunk on the floor. On my recovery I found myself supported in her arms, whilst she wept over me. Affected by her softness, I flung my arms about her neck, and sobbed out, "Ah! my child, can you forgive your unnatural mother?"—Mother, exclaimed she, gracious heaven! am I so blest! do you permit me to call you by that dear, that honoured name.—Then flinging herself at my feet—Oh, my dearest, my beloved mother, confirm

firm what you said, and bless your happy child.—If a blessing from a wretch like me can have any effect, you have it, my dear child; and may heaven preserve you from the perverse unhappy fate your mother has experienced. We wept for some time in each other's arms. Sally expressed her joy at this interview with heart-felt satisfaction. When I had disengaged myself from Julia, I went to my bureau and took out a note for two hundred pounds, presented it to Sally, and requested she would set off immediately for France, take up her residence in the convent, and as I doubted not that many would enquire after Julia, to inform all such, that she was the daughter of a gentleman of good family in South-

Southampton, whose mother dying in her infancy, her father, on marrying again, sent her to France to be educated; that his second wife being now dead, he had sent for Julia to superintend his family. She looked at me while I was speaking, with consternation in her countenance, but saw by the cast of mine that I would be obeyed. She knew by long experience that arguments were unnecessary; therefore arose, and flinging her arms round Julia's neck, burst into tears: then turned to me and said, I am ready to obey, my ady, all your commands; but this is the hardest you ever laid upon me. So saying, she stepped into the chaise, which had not removed from the door, and drove off.

Julia

Julia was silent during this conversation, but looked with unutterable anguish whilst she followed the chaise with her eyes. I was much affected, and took her hand, desired her not to regret this short parting, for they should not long be separated. This assurance seemed to comfort her; but she said she could not forbear feeling for her departure, as she was the only person whose kindness she was ever sensible of.—I answered, I applaud your sensibility; she is a worthy woman, and deserves your tenderest esteem; but strong necessity induces me to send her from you at present, but you may rely on my taking the earliest opportunity of recalling her.—She appeared satisfied: we went to dinner, and after that engaged in conversation. I
ques-

questioned her concerning the manner she passed her time at the convent, and of the state of her heart. This last interrogation put her into some confusion, but recovering herself; she told me, that several gentlemen had professed themselves her lovers; particularly the young Count de Revelles, who was a very amiable young man, but the situation she was placed in prevented her from encouraging his addresses; tho' she owned herself much prejudiced in his favour.—I asked her if the match would be agreeable to his family.—She answered she could not tell; for she never gave him an opportunity of talking on the subject, as it would be the means of bringing about an eclairecissement she was by no means prepared

prepared for. This was a severe, tho' not intended, reproach to me; I changed the discourse, and we chatted on different subjects. I found she was possessed of natural good sense, and many amiable virtues, and was rather hurt at the superiority I was conscious she had over me.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

IN CONTINUATION.

WE continued for ten days in the most perfect harmony. I began by degrees to forget how much I wronged her; and was less awed in her presence.

One evening, as we sat after dinner, she requested in a hesitating voice, that I would acquaint her with the events of my life; the request stunned me; I was for some time at a loss;—but at length told her she must rest contented with what she already knew, until after my death, which I hoped would

would not long retard the gratification of her curiosity. This speech affected her ; she burst into tears. —Me, cried she, you think unworthy of your confidence, and of the title you have for a short time blessed me with.—Ah ! my dear, my honoured father ! exclaimed she, in a passion of grief, you would not thus despise your unhappy child, were she permitted to behold you. These words convinced me she was not wholly unacquainted with what I wished to conceal. They threw me into a rage, which almost deprived me of the power of utterance. Wretch ! cried I, almost choaked with passion, would you blast my fame ? would you load me with infamy ? begone instantly ; and let me never more be cursed with the sight

fight of you ! She arose and flung herself at my feet. Ah, my dearest mother, pardon an involuntary exclamation ! Say you forgive me, and never more will I breathe a wish disagreeable to your will.—Leave me, answered I, calmly,—retire to your chamber—you have broken my heart.—Oh, say not so, my dearest mother ! Heaven is my witness, I would not give you a moment's pain to be mistress of the universe. Never will I quit this posture until you pronounce my pardon.—I pardon you, answered I, but go.—She obeyed, weeping, and left me in a state little short of distraction. Gracious heaven ! I exclaimed, is it not time my woes were ended ? For seventeen years I have not known an hour of
comfort ;

comfort; and must my few remaining days be one scene of complicated misery. I raved and wept, and kept my chamber several days. Julia begged often to be admitted, but was refused. I could bear no witness of my affliction, but grew peevish and insupportable to all about me.

L E T.

LETTER XXX.

IN CONTINUATION.

THINGS were in this situation when you arrived. I was surprised, as you might have seen at your visit, which you may believe I would gladly have dispensed with, but I had no right to appear displeased at what you endeavoured to make me believe proceeded from friendship. I therefore assumed an air of composure, and entered into company on purpose to employ my thoughts, which might otherwise betray the disorder of my mind. By endeavouring to

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keep

keep up the deception, my spirits were sunk to the lowest ebb, and the shock I yesterday received by your discovering Julia, has put the finishing stroke to my unhappy existence. The task is now performed, and may my fate be a warning to those proud souls

Whose vaulting ambition overleaps itself, and
falls on t'other side.——

I request when I am no more, that you will seek Mr. Hastings, for I have no doubt of Greville and he being one person ; and part not with Julia until you deliver her into the hands of a father. Let her recount what I have here penned, and implore his forgiveness for the wrongs her unhappy mother has done him. His generous
nature,

nature, I am convinced, will not reject her petition. I also desire that no restraint may be laid upon Julia, whenever she fixes her affections, let her meet with no opposition. Abbyville, the place we are in at present, was purchased for her. I have now only to add a wish, that my memory may be quickly forgotten by all those I have injured.

Agreeable to her ladyship's instructions, I am now preparing to set off for London to seek Mr. Hastings. Julia remains with Miss Manly until my return, that lady's health not permitting her to take a journey. I delay at present for an answer to a letter sent to Sally, containing an account of the late

melancholy event, as she may be able to give some intelligence concerning the person I am going in search of.

I am,

Dear Frank,

C. M.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

[MISS HASTINGS TO SALLY.]

AH, my friend, my beloved Sally, what a tale of misery have I read ! What a scene of woe have I been witness to ! That amiable parent so sighed after, so lately found, and so dear to my heart, is torn from me, and I am again left in a strange world, friendless and unhappy. Let me not be ungrateful, nor murmur against Providence, who still supports the mind under the severest afflictions. I have still friends on whom I can rely, a friend to whose tenderness and care I owe my very existence.

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I am sensible now of the vast debt I owe you, which cannot be repaid by the most boundless gratitude. Could fortune heal the wound my mind has received, I am made ample reparation, but there still hangs a weight upon my heart; for joined to the grief I feel for the severe loss I have sustained, doubts and fears are intermixed, lest I should not find in the supposed person, one so deservedly dear to me. Oh, my Sally, 'tis impossible to describe the anxiety of mind I labour under, and must still feel, until I am ascertained of the fate of my amiable and beloved father.

I have wrote to my dear friend Mademoiselle de Revelles, and informed her you would call upon her,

her, and requested she would introduce you to Mr. Greville. If he is still in France I may hope to be convinced, for you will certainly know him. Should you meet—let me indulge the pleasing supposition——make no delay, but come to England immediately. Come to your Julia, your child; and give me an opportunity of repaying, to my much esteemed friend, part of that gratitude with which my heart overflows.

My obligations to Sir Charles Middleton are infinite; he takes the deepest concern in my affairs, and is unremitting in his endeavours to render my situation pleasing. I appear as if he succeeded, for it would pain his generous

D 4 heart

heart if he entertained a doubt of my being happy. Write instantly, and ease, if possible, the mind of

Your

J. H.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

TO FRANCIS MORDAUNT, Esq.

I AM still detained here by the desire of Julia, who requests I will not leave her until Sally arrives. She is now on her journey. Hastings is come to England. This intelligence came by a letter from Mademoiselle de Revelles. He had been at the convent the day before Sally arrived. She knew him by the description of the lady abbess.

The Darcys visit here frequently.—Emily is in high spirits. Her lover, who was so much despised

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by

by her family, proves to be nephew and sole heir to Lord Blendham. He disguised his rank, willing that the woman he married should prefer him for himself alone. Happily for him, he made an impression on one whose prudence equalled her beauty. She owned a mutual affection, but refused corresponding without the consent of her parents; he solicited it under a feigned name, and got an absolute denial. He then proposed to Emily to go off with him, which she refused with disdain. On his intimating a doubt of her love, she assured him, that tho' she would not dispose of her hand without her parent's consent, she would not wed another.

He

He went to town, and laid his whole plan before his uncle, who was charmed with the young lady's behaviour. He wrote immediately to Mr. Darcy, and informed him, that his nephew had seen Miss Emily; had fallen in love with her, and the business of that letter was to know if his addresses would be acceptable. The proposal was received with joy by the whole family, except poor Emily, who prayed, sighed, and wept, but in vain, they were inexorable; she must be a lady spite of her remonstrances.

Her father accordingly answered his lordship's letter; acquainted him, that he thought himself honoured by his proposal, and waited
with

with impatience for their visiter. Emily's reliance now was on the generosity of her new admirer (the usual resource of love-sick damsels before an elopement) whom she designed to inform of her prepossession, and her design of never marrying any other person. If he did not comply with her request of withdrawing his pretensions, she resolved to elope, and take refuge with an aunt of her's who is an enemy to the whole male creation. Her plan being thus settled, she assumed an air of content before the family, that they might be less on their guard for what was to follow.

The wished for, yet dreaded, day at length arrived, on which Mr.
Harstrong

Harstrong was expected. He came, accompanied by his uncle, but guess the astonishment that was visible on each countenance on perceiving the identical person who had been rejected with so much disdain a few months before, introduced by Lord Blendham. Emily, on beholding her lover led forward by his lordship, fainted. He flew to support her——Then followed a number of embarrassed apologies on one side; excuses for the deception on the other.—At length all parties being mutually pleased with each other, particularly the lovers, they all sat down to dinner; after which the ladies retired, and left the old folks to settle the usual preliminaries to a wedding. The only impediment
now

now is, the tardiness of the lawyers, who seldom consider the impatience of lovers, but go their dull round with settlements, &c. with the same solemnity as if they were drawing a will.

Julia and I dined there yesterday ; she was introduced by the name of Hastings, and as a near relation to Lady Gertrude. The two unengaged ladies were particularly civil to your humble servant. I am not vain, and yet I think I could with very little difficulty, prevail on Miss Darcy to become Lady Middleton. Poor Brownlow, the gentleman I mentioned in a former letter, is now totally disregarded ; not honoured with a single smile. By the
bye

bye it is an intollerable thing to be a slave to a coquette. Miss Hastings has made a conquest of his lordship, he is an agreeable old gentleman, and makes love very humorously ; were he forty years younger, and addressed my mistress, I should be (to make use of a lady's expression) monstrously jealous. Julia sends to know will I walk ? I must break off to attend her. Adieu.

C. M.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIII.

SIR CHARLES MIDDLETON TO MISS
HASTINGS.

LONDON.

THIS is the fourth day since my arrival, and I cannot, as yet, gain any intelligence of Mr. Hastings. I have enquired at all the coffee-houses, and every other place where there was a probability of hearing of him, but without success. I called on Mr. Pultney yesterday, and informed him you were arrived in England, and would shortly call upon him. He said he would be ready at any moment to answer your demands. I enquired

enquired if a person of the name of Greville had made any enquiries lately about Lady Gertrude. He answered, he had not seen any such person. I asked if he recollected a Mr. Hastings, who formerly acted as Lord Lesby's tutor. He answered, perfectly ; but that gentleman was dead some years. I replied, I had reason to think he was alive, and now in England, but went by the name of Greville ; and requested, that if he called on him, as was probable, he would inform me of it, as I had something to acquaint him with, which nearly concerned him. He answered me, I might rely on his endeavours to find him, and of giving me notice. I then took my leave of the old gentleman, and proceeded

ceeded home, where I found Har-
strong. I accompanied him to his
lawyers; we found them busy;
but ten guineas he distributed to
the clerks, will forward his affairs
more than his most earnest intrea-
ties to their masters. Has young
Darcy made a declaration of his
flame yet? I could see the big
secret ready to start from his lips
every moment, tho' he endeavoured
to conceal it. It would be a pity
to drive so fine a fellow to despair,
and I know not how you can pos-
sibly avoid it; for you doubtless
mean to reward the passion of your
antiquated admirer. An estate of
twelve thousand a year, and sixty-
four years experience into the bar-
gain, is an offer not to be rejected.
You'll say my friendship for Emily
will

will prevent my accepting his lordship. Give me leave to remind you of an excellent proverb, "Charity begins at home." You answer me with a command, "We must not covet our neighbour's goods." Well, then, Darcy is the man I see. Pray command me; as I have so much business amongst the lawyers, it will take up little more time to get your matter adjusted; besides, it will prevent parting with your swain, as poor Emily is obliged to do. Be so kind as to present my respects to that lady, and believe me to be,

Your's, &c.

C. M.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV:

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

HASTEN to town, dear Julia, immediately on the receipt of this; my endeavours have at length proved successful. I received a note from Mr. Pultney this morning, requesting to see me. I guessed he had received some intelligence concerning Mr. Hastings, and hurried to him immediately. When I arrived at his house, I was shewn into the parlour, where I found him and another gentleman, whom he introduced to me as Mr. Hastings. I welcomed the latter to England. He returned my compliment with the most graceful ease.

ease. When we were seated, I told him, that a near relation of his longed to be introduced to him. He looked at me with a mixture of hope and uncertainty in his countenance. Mr. Pultney left the room. Is it possible! said he; dare I flatter myself!—It is, indeed, possible, said I, interrupting him; the amiable Julia, whom you met at the Marquis de Revelle's, is your daughter.—O! cried he, grasping my hand, you have restored me to life!—to myself! To-morrow I designed to take my leave of England—of the world, and wear out the remainder of my days in solitude, far from the haunts of men! But where is my beloved child, till I fly and clasp her in a father's arms?—You will

will soon see her; she is now at Abbyville, and no less impatient than yourself for this interview.—How did she come to the knowledge of me?—A late event explained every thing.—I understand you. He turned to the window to conceal his emotion. I requested he would favour me with his company until you came to town. He complied, and we now wait your arrival with the greatest impatience.

The reason of my not finding him before was, his continuing but one day in London. He told me, on his return to Paris, after an absence of twelve days, he went to the marquis's, and enquired for you soon after he came in. He
was

was informed you had embarked for England on a day's warning. He was thunderstruck at this intelligence, as he designed to enquire your connections from yourself; but it contributed to encourage the opinion he entertained of your being his.

As the marquis's family were wholly unacquainted with the particulars of his life, and as he found by a few questions, they were equally ignorant of what he wished to know concerning you, he resolved to take no notice to them, but come over to England, and leave no means untried to discover you. He enquired of the count, who was exceeding melancholy, the cause of his sadness. The latter
frankly

frankly owned, that your absence was the cause, and his apprehensions of never seeing you again, as the marquis refused to let him come to England in search of you, on account of his ignorance of your family. Mr. Hastings bid him be composed; told him he was coming to England, and would endeavour to discover your family and connections; and assured him, if he was successful, and you encouraged his addresses, he would intercede with the marquis to consent to the union. The young gentleman thanked him in raptures of joy. Mr. Hastings desired to know, what convent you had boarded at. The count informed him, it was at the Abby W——'s. As soon as he could disengage him-

himself, he flew to the convent, and enquired of the lady abbess, what part of England you had repaired to. She told him she was entirely ignorant of where you were gone, and of every thing concerning you: that the lady who acted as your companion, was extremely discreet: she had often enquired who you were, but could get no further information, than that you belonged to a noble family in England. He thanked the old lady for the information she had given him, and took his leave.

In a few days after, he embarked for England. On his arrival, repaired immediately to — street, and enquired for Lady Gertrude. The servant told him his lady was

in the country. He asked was it at L——. He said, no; he believed 'twas in Wales; and that Sir Charles had been gone down some weeks.—Who is Sir Charles, friend?—Who, sir! why my lady's husband. He was unprepared for this; it deprived him of utterance. The fellow took notice of his disorder, and asked him to walk into the house. This roused him; he turned from the door in a state of mind that can be better imagined than described, and would have continued his walk, without knowing whither he was going, were he not roused by a porter, with a load on his back coming plump against him; the shock almost threw him down; he looked round, and perceiving a tavern on the other side
of

of the way, he stepped over, and calling for pen and ink, wrote a letter to Lady Gertrude, upbraiding her, in the strongest terms, for her behaviour; and desired her to be prepared to see him, as he designed to set off next morning for Wales, and demand an explanation of her conduct. He sealed the letter, and threw it on the table; then, supporting his head with his hand, paused for a few moments; his ideas grew more clear.—Shall the patience I have been for years labouring to gain, be done away in a single moment of passion? Shall I blast the fame of a noble family, who were my benefactors—my friends? Oh, Lesby! thou wert my friend, and shall I load thy sister's name with infamy! The

recollection of Lesby softened him to tears ; he grew more collected, and at length resolved to go down to Wales, write to Lady Gertrude, and beg, in the humblest terms, if he had a child, he should be permitted to see it.

After he had taken this resolution, he grew more composed, and next morning began his journey. When he arrived at the inn, which is about a quarter of a mile from the dwelling-house, he dispatched his servant with a note, couched in such terms that it would not be understood, should it fall into any other hands but Lady Gertrude's. The servant quickly returned, and informed him, there was no one in the house but one woman servant, who

who informed him, that her lady had not been there for near two years ; she was gone to some other part of the country, she could not tell where.—I had now nothing to do, added he, but return to London, and designed to go abroad again immediately, when I recollected Mr. Pultney, and thought he could probably give me some information. I accordingly waited on him for that purpose ; he knew me instantly. I enquired of him the place where Lady Gertrude resided. He informed me that she was no more ; and that you heard I was in England, and had been seeking me some time, as you had something of consequence to communicate.

The tenderness, I ever felt for my beloved Gertrude revived, with redoubled force, on hearing she was no more ; I broke out in a transport of grief. Mr. Pultney, whose feelings do him honour, soothed me in the kindest terms, and again reminded me of the pressing enquiries you were making after me. This intelligence roused and revived my sinking spirits, as it still encouraged the hopes I had for some time entertained. I waited with impatience for the return of the servant, and in the interval endeavoured to divest myself of the prejudice I had, at the first mentioning of your name, conceived against you. The moment you appeared it vanished ; and now accept my thanks, for the trouble
you

you have had in searching me, and for the unfeigned joy you have diffused over my soul. We embraced with mutual good will—and thus, my dear Julia, I have given you the sum of what has passed since my meeting with your father. If you set off on the receipt of this letter, I will meet you at B——. Mr. Hastings is not to accompany me, as a public inn would be an improper place for such a meeting. Adieu, and believe me to be your truly affectionate friend,

C. MIDDLETON.

P. S. If Miss Manly be able to undertake the journey, prevail on her to accompany you.

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LETTER XXXV.

SIR CHARLES MIDDLETON TO FRANCIS
MORDAUNT, Esq.

I Informed you in my last of my meeting with Hastings. Julia set off for town, accompanied by Sally, immediately on the receipt of my letter. The meeting between her and her father was truly affecting. They are the perfect resemblance of each other; it would be impossible to meet with a more striking likeness. Hastings does not appear more than two or three and thirty, tho' he assures me he is in his fortieth year. He pleases me not a little, when he assures me, that next to Julia, I am the dearest
to

to him in the world. He is a noble, generous minded fellow, and deserved a better fate.

The morning after Julia arrived, I, at Julia's desire, mentioned the packet left by Lady Gertrude. Hastings expressed his impatience to hear her story, as, he said, I had dropped something that gave him room to suppose she was not so culpable as his imagination had for some time represented her. Julia said, she feared she had not spirits enough to go thro' with it.—Then you must not attempt it, my love, answered her father; give me the papers, and, with Sir Charles's leave, I will retire and peruse them.—No, sir, replied Julia, my mother's last request must be com-

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plied with ; you must hear it from my lips. She took the packet and began to read. Hastings's features underwent many changes during the recital. When she mentioned Victoria at Bath, he clasped his hands together. From that until after their marriage, he would bite his lips, and frequently lay his hand to his forehead. In that passage which described her return from Lady Frances, after their quitting L——, the big drops coursed down his cheeks, tho' he endeavoured to suppress them. Julia's voice faltered ; but, after a few moments hesitation, she went on. At Lord Lesby's death, and the earl's distress, he sobbed audibly. Julia and I were much affected. Wherever she mentioned him with
tender-

tenderness, his face glowed, and a most engaging softness beamed from his eyes. When Julia concluded, he exclaimed—Oh! my mistaken Gertrude, how few thy errors—how severe thy sufferings! I forgive you, added he, clasping his hands; but can I ever hope for forgiveness, that suffered you to remain in an error? I should have fought you to the extremity of the earth; nor ever quitted your feet, until you informed me of my offence. Most sincerely do I acquit you. Oh! Sir Charles, you knew not half the virtues of that charming woman! Every amiable virtue was deposited in her breast—one vile passion only was an inhabitant; and her evil genius, in the form of Lady Frances, roused it
for

for her destruction; for it is too certain, sorrow has destroyed her valued life. Here his voice faltered, and he quitted the room precipitately. In half an hour he returned. Julia was still weeping; but on the entrance of her father, arose and dried her eyes. I prevailed on them to accompany me on an airing. We drove to Hyde-park, where there was a vast deal of company in coaches and on horseback; the scene amused them, and we all returned to dinner in tolerable spirits. In the evening, my aunt Sternham and Harriot paid us a visit; the former expressed herself in very affectionate terms to Julia, who was introduced to her as a near relation to Lady Gertrude, for whom she had a great esteem.

esteem. Harriot is a good lively girl, and was intimate with Julia in an instant; they seemed mutually pleased with each other, perhaps from a similarity of tempers; for, tho' Julia is not so volatile as Harriot, I see she is naturally lively. Mr. Hastings has written to the Marquis de Revelles, and informed him of his meeting with his daughter. He tells him he was married early in life to a near relation of the Earl of M——'s: that there was no person privy to the marriage, but Lady Gertrude Lesby, and the young woman who had the care of his Julia from her infancy. Soon after he went abroad with Lord Lesby, his wife died, giving birth to his daughter, and he was kept ignorant of it

it until his arrival in England. Lady Gertrude Lesby, who had his daughter in charge, was at that time in a distant part of Wales; she wrote to him, and told him his daughter should be taken all imaginable care of, and requested he would not remove her for some years. England, he added, became hateful to him, as he lost the only woman that could render life pleasing to him: that he went abroad again, and then accounted for the melancholy which possessed him. Many unforeseen events, which he would recount hereafter, detained him longer from England than he expected. Soon after his arrival, he was so happy as to meet with his daughter, who was no other than the young lady he
he

he had seen at his house. This is the story sent to the marquis, and which passes current here also; for it would be impossible to conceal their relationship.

The Darcys are to be in town shortly. Emily was married last Wednesday. I had a letter from Harstrong yesterday; and, by the incoherence of his stile, judge him to be intoxicated with his happiness. Mr. Hastings has promised to recount to-morrow, what befel him since his departure from England. It shall be the subject of another letter, for this, I think, is spun to a reasonable length. Believe me to be,

Dear Frank,

Your's,

C. MIDDLETON.

LETTER XXXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

AGREEABLE to my promise, I sit down to give you the particulars of Mr. Hastings's story ; which I shall, as nearly as possible, in his own words.

I shall begin at the time of my accepting the duke's invitation to live with him, which I did with the greatest reluctance, as I considered myself as a dependant on his bounty, and that to me was an irksome, humiliating situation. His behaviour, however, soon reconciled me to myself, for he treated me with the most friendly unreserve.

serve. Several places were at his disposal during the time I continued in his family, that would have satisfied the utmost of my ambition; but he would not suffer me to accept of any one of them, as he said he had one in view for me, that would make me ample amends for the time I should wait for it. I should have been tolerably easy under these assurances, but for the passion I began to fear I had inspired Lady Frances with. Her eyes too plainly indicated what passed in her breast. I endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid seeing her without company, but in vain; she took all possible opportunities of throwing herself in my way, and made such advances, that, had I availed myself
of

of them, would have stamped me the worst of villains. I grew extremely uneasy at my situation, which was truly disagreeable ; and one day spoke to his grace concerning a resolution I had formed of going abroad in quality of a tutor to some young nobleman. He seemed surprised at my resolution, and requested I would think no more of it. I replied, I could think of nothing else, and assured him, I could meet with nothing so agreeable to my inclination. Seeing me so fixed in my resolution, he said he would endeavour to serve me that way ; but wished I had not been so determined, as he could make a better provision for me in another manner. He spoke to the Earl of M—— shortly after, and gave that

that nobleman so flattering an account of me, that he received the proposal with joy. I was introduced to him and Lord Lesby, and agreed to make part of his family in a fortnight. When Lady Frances was informed by the duke of the change I was going to make, she asked me why I wished to go abroad. I answered, I had a passion for rambling nothing could assuage. She threw a reproachful look at me, which I did not seem to observe, and quitted the room. In a few minutes, her maid delivered me a note, which contained the following words:

“ If your indifference be affected,
“ as I firmly hope it is, meet me
“ in the temple after dinner. If
“ you

“you are really insensible, (the
“thought shocks me!) tell me
“so ingenuously, and at once end
“the doubts of

“F——.”

I was greatly perplexed, on reading this note, how to act. To declare to a lady she was an object of indifference, was against all system of good breeding. On the other hand, to feign a passion I felt not, would be acting the villain, and was utterly repugnant to my nature. In the midst of my embarrassment some company arrived unexpectedly, and relieved me from this perplexing situation. I saw she would be prevented from keeping the appointment; and, by the indifference of my countenance during

ing the course of the evening, she could perceive I did not regret it. When the company broke up, she retired, and I saw her no more for two days. When we met, she assumed a quite different behaviour, which gave me room to think she had banished me entirely from her thoughts. This, you may be assured, gave me much satisfaction; I breathed freer than usual, and conversed with her with the greatest ease.

The day arrived that was to introduce me to the Earl of M——. I had conceived an unfavourable opinion of Lady Gertrude, from the accounts I had frequently received from Lady Frances, who described her haughty and imperious,

perious, and one that scarce deigned to look at any man below a duke. This intelligence gave me no concern, as I then imagined the low state of my finances would render me proof against the most seducing charms : for fame reported her beautiful.

With this prepossession I arrived at the earl's, accompanied by the duke and Lady Frances. The first look in Lady Gertrude almost confirmed me in the opinion I entertained of her. But when his grace introduced me, she received my compliments with a modesty nearly bordering on bashfulness. There was a delicate softness in her voice that was exquisitely pleasing. The first tones thrilled to my heart. I
scarce

scarce believed her to be the person described, and could with difficulty suppress my indignation against her calumniator; so effectually did one sight of her charms drive from my memory every idea to her disadvantage. From the first moment she spoke, I became her captive; nor could time, place, or circumstance since dislodge the passion that then took root in my soul. It would be needless to repeat each circumstance that happened from that time until my departure with Lord Lesby, as her ladyship, in her narrative has given a particular account of each, therefore I shall only speak of what passed since our separation.

Nothing

Nothing happened during our stay in France worthy note, as we continued there but a short time, Lord Lesby being impatient to get to Naples, whither Victoria had arrived some months before. He had a passion for that lady, tho' he never explicitly owned it. On his arrival he waited on her to pay his respects, and was invited by the baron to dinner. I received an invitation presently after, and we passed an agreeable day, there being a large party of both sexes, all people of the first quality. Lord Lesby was in raptures with the baron and company; the former gave us both a general invitation, which we constantly made use of, and were engaged in every polite party.

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As the season advanced which rendered the country delightful, the baron invited several gentlemen and ladies to pass some time at his country seat, My pupil and I were included in the number. There was nothing omitted that nature or art could produce for our entertainment. Festivity and mirth went forward. We passed the time happily, for each seemed to enjoy the good before them: Victoria alone seemed insensible to joy; she was absent and melancholy, and complained of excessive weak spirits. Lord Lesby paid her the most tender assiduity, and flew to obey her slightest command. There were two other gentlemen who paid their particular addresses, but she behaved to all with an

equal degree of coolness. We had been in the country near five weeks, and each day introduced some new scene of amusement, when the unfortunate affair happened which deprived my dear Lesby of his life

I never quitted him from the moment he was brought in wounded. He scarcely spoke during the night. In the morning when he was pronounced past recovery, he looked earnestly at me for some time, then making an effort to take my hand, I stretched it to him, and leaned over him in the bed. "I am dying, my dear Hastings," said he, "and before I go would wish to be satisfied in one point.—

point.——Tell me sincerely, has Gertrude ever given you encouragement to hope for her hand."

As this was no time to trifle, I told him explicitly all that had passed. He replied, "You might have trusted me, for you are the brother of my choice. I knew you were dear to each other, but feared Gertrude's caprice would keep you longer at a distance than was necessary. I would endeavour to write to her in your favour, but it is now useless, as I hope she is sufficiently sensible of your worth."

I could no longer suppress the emotions his expressions of kindness produced: my sobs became audible. He pressed my hand. "Be comforted, Hastings, and regret not my departure. Bright

as my prospects seemed, I have for some time past been overwhelmed with misery ; and you unintentionally have been the cause. I need not speak more intelligibly, as you are undoubtedly acquainted with the movements of my heart. I have long fostered a hopeless passion in my heart, but hopes and fears are now at an end. Most sincerely do I wish you happiness ; and may the object of my affection shortly meet with a man more sensible of her love than he who at present possesses it !”

It was with difficulty he pronounced these last words ; too much speaking overpowered his spirits : he fainted away. I thought he had breathed his last, but he quickly

ly shewed signs of returning life ; his eyes shone more lively, and his whole countenance appeared more animated than before. Overjoyed at this sudden change, I flew to acquaint the physician, who was below stairs : he came up with me, but his countenance betrayed no favourable omen. I once more took the hand of my beloved friend—the moisture of death was on it. My distress was inconceivable—he seemed sensible of my feelings, and gave a most expressive look. The power of speech was no longer his. He continued in this state for about half an hour, and then fell into a sleep which terminated in death.

When I found he was really gone, I resigned myself to the most extravagant transports of grief. I clung to his lifeless body, and was with difficulty removed. The baron's whole family felt the deepest concern for his death; a concern it was impossible not to feel, as the gentleness of his manners, and sweetness of disposition, endeared him to every person.

The task of acquainting his family with his death was a severe one. I wrote to the earl and lady Gertrude. To her I recounted our last conversation;—that to the earl produced the effects related in her ladyship's narrative. I waited impatiently for answers to my letters, and was much surprised when the usual time passed without my receiving

ceiving any. I again wrote, but to no purpose. Disappointed the second time, I prepared to go to England; and was ready to depart, when the baron pressed me so earnestly to spend another week with him, that, without being guilty of ingratitude and ill manners, it was impossible to refuse. I was, however, extremely uneasy, and apprehensive that something extraordinary had happened, when I received a letter from Mr. Pultney which added to my surprise. He informed me of the death of the earl, and of the ample provision he had left me; but was silent on every other matter. I was grieved at his lordship's death,—but more than grieved and amazed

at Lady Gertrude's silence. Nothing could now detain me.

I set forward with all possible expedition, and on my arrival in England, proceeded directly to Portland Row. I found the house shut up, and only one servant left to take care of it. I enquired where Lady Gertrude was, but could gain no information. The servant said all letters and messages directed to her lady, were sent to Mr. Pultney's. It was too late to trouble Mr. Pultney that evening, therefore I deferred waiting on him till morning. After the usual compliments and enquiries, I requested a letter to Lady Gertrude. He replied it was not in his power to give me one, as he was strictly en-
joined

joined to the contrary by Lady Gertrude.

Thunderstruck at this information, my countenance betrayed my astonishment; I lost, for some moments, the power of articulation. Mr. Pultney, who undoubtedly observed my confusion, said, if I had any thing particular to communicate he would forward a letter for me. As I concluded by not receiving answers to my former one, it would be ineffectual, I declined his offer, and took my leave.

LETTER XXXVII.

IN CONTINUATION.

IT would be impossible to convey to you an idea of the various conjectures which occupied my mind, concerning her ladyship's behaviour. Surely, thought I, she cannot suspect me for neglecting her brother.—And even so, would not a wife forgive! Again I imagined she repented having married a person beneath her in point of fortune. This thought stung me more severely than the former, and nearly determined me to renounce her for ever. But love soon gained the

the ascendancy : I strove to make excuses, for I knew not what, and resolved, by some means, to learn where she was, and obtain an interview, when I hoped to erase from her mind every idea she had conceived to my disadvantage.

For this purpose I gave my servant orders to attend the post-office, and see if any letters were directed to her. In a few days he brought me word that she was with a Miss Tranvers in Wales. This lady I knew to be her aunt.

I presently departed for Wales, and as soon as I arrived, waited on her, and was informed she was from home. I requested to see Miss Tranvers, and was shewn in-

to

to her apartment, as she was not able to come down stairs. She received me with much civility, but told me her niece had given positive orders I should not be admitted, as soon as she heard of my arrival in England. I replied, it was very extraordinary, that I should be totally excluded from her presence, without being informed of my offence : that I was not conscious of having given her ladyship any, and hoped I should not be deemed impertinent, if I insisted on an explanation. Miss Tranvers said she was wholly unacquainted with her motive for refusing to see me ; but would try her utmost influence in my favour, and promised I should hear from her in the morning. On receiving

ing this assurance, I took my leave, and proceeded to an inn, which was about a mile from the house. I had not been there more than an hour, when I received a note, acquainting me, that Lady Gertrude's fixed determination was, never to see me more : that she had sufficient reasons for her conduct towards me, and nothing could alter her resolution. I mounted my horse immediately on reading this note, and set forward for London, without well knowing what I did. Repentment occupied my mind, and I resolved never more to attempt seeing her.

I made but a short stay in London, but took shipping for France ; where, shortly after my arrival, I
met

met the Marquis de Revelles and his lady. They were just returned from Naples, where I first had the honour of knowing them. They both professed for me the warmest esteem; and entreated me in such affectionate terms, to make their house my home, that I found it impossible to refuse. This amiable couple omitted nothing that could contribute to dispel the melancholy which took entire possession of me; for the recollection of my Gertrude's unkindness, would rush upon me in the gayest scenes, and render me insensible to every joy. I corresponded constantly with the Baron de Liffurges, from the time of my departure from Italy. He frequently requested I would pay him a visit; and as all places were alike

alike to me, as soon as I obtained consent from my friend Revelles, I departed, and arrived safe at Naples.

The baron and his son received me with the strongest expressions of friendship. Victoria had been married some months before to a gentleman whose estate lay in a province at a considerable distance, whither they were gone to reside. I should have mentioned, that the baron honoured me with an offer of that lady's hand, before I quitted Naples the first time. I was obliged to declare my situation, but assured him, I had a due sense of the honour he designed me. Soon after I arrived at the baron's, young Lissurges persuaded me to accompany him and several other gentlemen,

men, to a feat he had about thirty miles from the city. My companions were a set of what we call in England, choice spirits ; who, after passing the night in offering libations to the jolly god, would remain under the influence of Morpheus until noon.

As I felt no inclination to partake of their nightly revels, I generally retired early, as it gave me an opportunity of rising to enjoy the beauties of the morning. The walks, for some miles, were extremely pleasant. I arose one morning earlier than usual, and, after walking a considerable time, struck into a strange road, which led to a village I had never been in before. I saw none of the inhabitants

bitants stirring, it being very early; and, after looking about some time, I turned in order to return home. I continued my walk some time, my eyes bent on the ground, when raising them, I perceived it was not the road I came. I was perplexed for some time what to do, as I could form no judgment of the right one; but at length determined to go forward, as I expected to meet with some of the country people, who would direct me. Having continued my rout about half an hour, I perceived before me a thick grove of trees; the sun had just risen, which added to the beauty of the scene, and rendered it truly picturesque. My curiosity being now awakened, impelled me to go forward, and indulge myself

self with a nearer view. I had not proceeded far, when I found myself encompassed round with trees, which, as I advanced, were so thick as to hide the refulgent rays of the sun.

In this gloomy situation, some fears for my own safety obtruded. I repented my temerity in venturing so far in an unknown place; which, joined to an appetite I had acquired by my walk, made me wish heartily to be back in the village. As I turned, with an intention of tracing my steps back again, I had a glance of a man thro' the trees. He held a book in his hand, to which he seemed to pay great attention. The sight of him, and the manner of his employ, dispelled

pelled my apprehensions. I hastened to accost him, and requested to know where I was. He did not perceive me till I spoke; then gazed at me some moments in silence.—Pray answer me, repeated I; I have strayed farther than I intended, and shall be much obliged to you, if you will inform me where I can procure some refreshment.—You are six miles from S——t, replied he, sternly, from whence I suppose you came.—You are right, I answered; I came from S——t, but I did not imagine I had walked half that number of miles.—You are doubtless weary, returned he, after so long a walk; stop here for a few moments; I'll procure you some refreshment, and then conduct you to

to the right road. Before I had time to thank him, he disappeared amongst the trees, but returned in a few minutes, accompanied by an old gentleman of a most prepossessing appearance, who accosted me with politeness, and requested I would follow him. I bowed obedience. He struck into a path which led to a close avenue of trees, with many windings. When we got to the end, there appeared a large lawn, with a neat house, covered with jessamine: it looked the seat of content. I began to fancy myself transported into the enchanted regions of fable; for I had never seen any thing approach so near my idea of them as the prospect that lay before me. My conductor spoke not until we entered

tered the house; he then turned and took my hand—Welcome, stranger, said he; you are the first that has entered these doors these eighteen years. Providence hath directed you hither, to close the eyes of an unfortunate man, who has long been secluded from an ungrateful world; but I will not detain you in idle converse until you have got some refreshment. He then ordered breakfast, which was served in all the native elegance of rural simplicity. I was much amazed at the novelty of every thing about me, but suspended my curiosity until we had breakfasted; I then requested he would not deem me too inquisitive, in entreating a continuance of the conversation he had interrupted. He, smiling,

smiling, took my hand—I see something in your face, said he, which tells me I shall rejoice at this meeting. You behold a man, who, for eighteen years, has not seen a human face, save those of my two attendants, until I saw your's. This is no common chance; some unknown power has conducted thy steps hither. Thy aspect has confirmed me in this opinion; it is such as, often as I have been deceived, I would still trust, were I to enter into an ungrateful world. I returned him thanks for the favourable opinion he had conceived of me, and assured him I would never give him reason to change it. When you have read the story of my life, replied he, you can judge whether I have reason to think favourably

yourably of mankind. I wrote it some years ago; you may peruse it at your leisure. At present, you may be better amused in looking over the demesne; but I will first shew you the house. He led me thro' a variety of rooms, and at length entered a library, where there was a well chosen collection of the best authors.—I see you have provided company for your retirement, said I. He sighed—yes, answered he, when reflection grows too poignant, I have recourse to some of those, as they at times dispel the gloomy ideas it occasions. He opened a door, which led into a parterre, the most beautiful I ever beheld. I expressed my admiration of it in strong terms. He seemed satisfied that it pleased me.

me.—Here, said he, I sometimes enjoy a little relaxation from my woes, in contemplating the works of my Creator : I lose the remembrance of those ills that were accumulated on me, by what is called the most perfect of his creatures. He pronounced these words in a tone of voice that affected me. I observed his countenance attentively ; sorrow was strongly marked there. Surely, thought I, this man's misfortunes must have been great, that he still retains the traces of them. I felt the greatest impatience to be made acquainted with them ; but recollecting how long I had been absent, and fearing my friend would be alarmed, I postponed the gratification of my curiosity for the present, and apologized

gized to my host for being obliged to leave him so soon. I said I feared my absence would occasion some disquietude to a gentleman with whom I was on a visit.—

Apologies are unnecessary, answered he; my servant shall conduct you to the town; but may I flatter myself I have not seen you for the last time?—You may rely on seeing me to-morrow early, I replied; I am much mortified at being obliged to leave you so soon, as nothing could give me greater pleasure than the enjoyment of your company. He pressed my hand, and answered—I shall expect your return with impatience; Cranmer shall wait for you at the entrance of the wood, for it would be impossible for you to explore this la-

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G byrinth

byrinth without a guide. I must request your secrefry about this place, left it should excite the curiofity of people that would interrupt my retirement. Invent fome ftory for your delay and abfence to-morrow, and come as early as poffible. I promifed to obey his inftructions, and wifhing him a good day, fet forward with my conductor. We walked near two miles, thro' fhady groves and winding avenues of trees. I obferved it was not the way I came.—It is part of it, fir, faid Cranmer; the avenue you entered is on your right hand; this will bring you fooner home. Many people have loft their way fince my mafter has taken up his refidence here. The houfe was built, and many of the trees planted
by

by his grandfather. My master's misfortunes were such as gave him a distaste to the world; he chose this place as a retreat from it. The paths are so intricate, that it is impossible for any but those that have traced them often, to find their way. The people of the village, having often been deceived when they thought they were returning home, have desisted from coming, and warn strangers from attempting it. When any are proof against their admonitions, and venture into the wood, I generally meet them, and conduct them out thro' the most difficult paths. I would have acted thus to you also, had you not mentioned refreshment. As no one ever came so near the house within half a mile, I gave my mas-

ter a description of your person and manner, and told him how near you were to the house. He instantly bid me conduct him to you. This command surprised me, but I obeyed. As he requested to see you again, and promised to recount to you his life, I know I have not acted wrong in giving you this information. By this time we were come to a cluster of trees, which formed a square; I saw no passage, and said to Cranmer—I fear we have beguiled the time in talking, and are caught in a snare.—O, said he, I'll quickly dispel your fears on that head; then taking a key from his pocket, and having removed some of the brambles with his hand, he opened a small door, which was covered in the same manner

manner on the other side. We were obliged to stoop very low to get thro'. When we were at some distance, Cranmer desired me to look behind, and asked me did I think it possible to discover their habitation? I answered in the negative. We struck into several intricate paths, which at length brought us into a large meadow, from whence we had a view of S—t. When we came to the extremity near the road-side, we found it encompassed round by a broad and deep ha-ha.—Have you a key to this, said I; or must I venture my neck?—Neither, he replied; then going to a small distance, he drew up a large plank, which was hidden by the long grass, and put

it across; I passed over with ease,
and desiring Cranmer to meet me
at five next morning, I proceeded
towards the castle.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

IN CONTINUATION.

I FOUND Liffurges and his guests much alarmed at my absence, and all in a breath demanded where I was. I answered all, by saying I had met with an old gentleman, as I walked out early in the morning, who invited me to look at his house and garden: that having found both extremely handsome, they employed my attention some time; and that I complied with the owner's request of staying to breakfast: that he was an agreeable man, and pressed me much to pass the day

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with

with him. I excused myself, lest my absence should render my friends uneasy, but promised to wait on him on the morrow : this, added I, is a full account of my adventures since morning. They were satisfied with this account ; we soon after went to dinner, and the evening passed in the usual manner.

I arose early next morning, and hastened to the appointed place, where I found Cranmer waiting. He led me a different way from that we came the day before, and thro' the most delightful paths. Mr. Jeptson had been waiting at the entrance of the avenue some time ; he advanced to meet me, and stretched out his hand, which I shook

I shook most cordially.—I thank you, said he, for keeping your appointment; and am glad you were not afraid to venture again into this recess.—My reception yesterday, answered I, gave me no cause for apprehension; it was such as made me impatient to renew my visit. We went to breakfast; I enquired how he procured necessaries. He told me Cranmer went to town once a month, and brought every thing they wanted.—You shall see presently, added he, that we are not ill provided. When we had breakfasted, he led me into a large lawn, in which were a vast number of cattle. On one side was a pond, that was nearly covered over with tame fowl, such as ducks, geese, &c. on the other side was a

large orchard, where there was a vast quantity of every kind of fruit the clime afforded. I was much pleased with every thing I saw, and expressed my approbation of them to my friend; I said it would be some time before I should be tired ranging thro' his domain.— I wish, replied he, you would try the experiment, and pass a few weeks here; I do not expect you should seclude yourself from the world, but if you can make it convenient to yourself to pass a short time here, your company will give me infinite satisfaction. I returned him thanks in as warm a manner as possible, and told him he might command my company whenever he thought proper.—My dear friend, he replied, I have not been deceived

deceived in you; go and come when fancy directs, and expect from me the sincerest welcome. The old gentleman's kindness affected me; I beheld him with veneration.—Never, said I, in a faltering voice, have I known the kindness of a parent; will you, sir, permit me to look upon you in that light?—Most gladly, my son! he exclaimed, clasping me in his arms; and proud shall I be, to be distinguished by that title. Henceforward look upon me in the light of a tender and indulgent father: long as I have been secluded from a world that's hateful to me, I would again enter it to give you pleasure. I have a large estate in another province; whilst I live, the revenues of it shall be your's: that goes

goes to the next akin after my death; but this spot I can leave to whom I will; it shall also be your's.—Stop, sir, said I, and do not overwhelm me with this flood of unmerited kindness. Believe me, your wealth would be no inducement for me to pass a single day with you; I prize your friendship, and the title you have given me, far above it; and whatever faults you may hereafter discover in my disposition, be assured covetousness, or ingratitude, will not be in the number.—I am fully convinced of it, answered he; and the first moment I beheld you, I resolved in my mind what I now inform you of.

Words

Words would be too poor to express my thanks to this worthy, but unfortunate man. I took his hand and raised it to my lips; then pointed to my breast, signifying that my acknowledgments lay there. He understood me, and said—You owe me none; I have yet done nothing; and your friendship and esteem will be ample compensation for what is in my power to do for you.

When we returned to the house, we found an elegant repast prepared. When dinner was over, he brought me to the library, and taking a packet from a shelf, delivered it into my hand.—I shall leave you for a short time, said he; in the interval amuse yourself with this;

this ; it contains the most remarkable passages of my past life, and my reasons for quitting a base, ungrateful world. He then left me. I opened the manuscript, and began to read as nearly as I can recollect as follows.

LET.

LETTER XXXIX.

THE HISTORY OF MR. JEPTSON.

I WAS born in the province of Leinster, in Ireland, the second son of a good family. My brother and I, being nearly of an age, were sent to the university together; and when we had finished our studies there, set out on the grand tour. My brother was much addicted to gambling, and, I might add, every other fashionable vice. He gave me much uneasiness during our stay abroad, lest he should fall a victim to his follies, as he kept the most abandoned company of both sexes. I was happy on receiving

ceiving orders to return home, as I imagined the presence of his friends would be some curb on his vicious inclinations; but I was mistaken. Shortly after we arrived, he became acquainted with a profligate set of infamous gamblers. All the admonitions of his friends were insufficient to reclaim him; he followed a course directly opposite to their wishes. My mother was particularly grieved at his manner of life, as he was her favourite. She often advanced him sums of money to pay his debts, on a promise of amendment; but finding he put it to a different use, she gave up to the sorrow his behaviour filled her with, and in a short time died of a broken heart. On her death-bed, she prayed him to amend his course

course of life ; set before him the consequences of his present extravagances, and what he must expect in future. He listened with seeming attention to her discourse ; promised to observe her instructions, and expressed much sorrow and contrition for the effect his follies had on an amiable and tender parent.

For some time after her death, he adhered strictly to his good resolutions ; kept early hours ; paid more attention to his family, and seemed to return a sincere affection I felt for him with interest ; for, tho' we were constantly together from our infancy, he had always held me at a distance, and seemed jealous of the good opinion my friends

honoured me with. He now altered his behaviour entirely towards me, made many acknowledgments of his former unkindness, lamented his follies, but most of all regretted the misapplication of the money he had received from time to time to pay his debts, as they were such as he was liable to be affronted for, being contracted at play. By his altered manner, I concluded there was a thorough reformation wrought in him, and determined to give him the money. I enquired into the amount of them; he told me fourteen hundred pounds would discharge them all. In a few days I procured him that sum. He seemed to doubt I was in earnest when I put it into his hands; but, when convinced, was

was strong in his expressions of gratitude and affection. All our friends were amazed and pleased at the agreeable change in him; for my part, there was nothing could give me equal satisfaction, for I loved him with a sincere fraternal affection.

He continued some time in this manner. One morning he told me he was going some miles out of town with a gentleman he named. In about an hour afterwards he set out, and did not return at night. I was under no apprehension, as the gentleman he told me was to accompany him was a man of extreme good character. It was the month of April; the weather being remarkably fine, I
arose

arose next morning with an intent of walking, and had not proceeded above two or three streets, when I perceived a crowd about the door of one of the most noted gaming-houses in town. I stopped a moment to enquire what was the matter, but before I could be answered, the crowd gave way, and my brother was kicked into the street. I flew instantly to the spot, and seizing the person, demanded why he used that gentleman (meaning my brother) in that manner. I waited not for a reply, but whirling him round, performed the same operation I had so lately got a lesson of, and laid him sprawling on the ground. He arose immediately, and drawing his sword, demanded instant satisfaction.

tion. Here my brother interposed, and insisted on fighting him.—No, replied the gentleman, you are a scoundrel and a sharper; I have given you your desert for cheating me, but deem you unworthy to encounter with my sword! On saying this he turned to me; I was by this time prepared for him, having got a sword from a gentleman present. We parried several thrusts; my antagonist seemed inflamed with a desire of revenge, and fought with great heat. I was more cool, tho' not less determined, and guarding against a lunge directed to my heart, wounded him just over the hip. He instantly fell, declaring he was killed. There were many people present, but no one attempting to stop me, I walked leisurely

leisurely home, and acquainted my father with the result of my morning's ramble. His distress was undiscrivable; he advised me to set off with all expedition to the continent, which I did accordingly, and arrived safe in four days.

The first letters I received after my arrival gave an account of the gentleman's death. This news grieved me exceedingly, for, added to the regret I felt for taking the life of a fellow-creature, I was fully sensible of the unworthiness of him for whom I was induced to quarrel. I had not been long in France before I became acquainted with a family of the name of Vainville; there were four sons, and a daughter who was exquisitely lovely.

lovely. I became enamoured of her person, and, after visiting her some time, made a declaration of my passion. She received my proposal without embarrassment, and referred me to her father for an answer. As he had but a moderate fortune, I apprehended no difficulty, nor was I mistaken; I was accepted, and a day fixed for the celebration of our nuptials, which when arrived, presented me with the choicest gift heaven could bestow. As I inherited a large fortune by my mother, it enabled me to take an elegant house, and set up a handsome equipage. My wife's eldest brother was a lieutenant in the army. As I loved her to distraction, I thought nothing in my power too much for her family,

family, and shortly after we were married, procured him the rank of major. Her youngest brother, a lad of fifteen, constantly resided with us.

When I was about a year married, I received the disagreeable news of my father's death; and shortly after, from different people with whom I corresponded, that of the dissipated manner my brother lived in. I was sensibly grieved at this intelligence, and wrote to him immediately, exhorting him to alter his course of living, and added an invitation to him to come over to France, where every means should be tried to render his stay agreeable. I thought if I could separate him from his present companions,

panions, and have him with me, I could divest him of some of the bad principles he had imbibed.— What a weak supposition! I have since experienced, that a heart once corrupted, can never be reclaimed. But to return: I received no answer to that letter, nor to several others I wrote to the same purpose. When eighteen months had passed, during which interval I never received a line from him, he sent a letter, wrote in a submissive, penitential stile. He began with apologizing for his neglect, and confessing himself highly culpable, that he had on one fatal night risked his whole fortune at the gaming-table, by which run of ill luck he was entirely ruined. He expressed much contrition for his bad conduct,

duct, and added, if I would now afford him an asylum, his future life should be employed in atoning for the former part of it. I had met with nothing for some time, that gave me so much pleasure; I rejoiced that he had lost his fortune, as I hoped it would be the means of effecting a thorough reformation. I answered his letter immediately, and gave him an assurance of an hearty welcome; requested he would make all possible expedition, as both my wife and I longed to embrace him. There was an apartment immediately got ready for his reception. We waited not long for him to occupy it, for he arrived much sooner than I expected. His presence gave me unfeigned satisfaction, but I was
much

much shocked at his altered appearance ; he was pale and thin, and his whole person emaciated to such a degree as to be scarce known: the consequence of his debaucheries. He appeared quite different to his former self in every particular ; his gaiety had entirely forsaken him, and instead of his former air of levity and thoughtlessness, had contracted a gloomy, thoughtful countenance. I was very uneasy at seeing him melancholy, and imagining his state of dependance sat heavy on him, determined to remove that cause of dejection, and had a settlement of five hundred a year drawn up, which I presented him with. He received it with surprise, and many expressions of everlasting gratitude ;

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declared

declared how unworthy he was of so many acts of kindness, and shed some hypocritical tears as a confirmation of his contrition. I embraced him with tenderness, overjoyed at this proof of his sensibility; desired him not to think of the obligation, as I was amply repaid by the change I perceived in his sentiments. After this his melancholy somewhat abated, tho' he still kept up a specious appearance, and went seldom abroad, except on invitation with the family, or in company with the major, my wife's eldest brother, who at that time came to pay us a visit, having obtained leave of absence for three months. My brother and he soon became extremely intimate; this gave me pleasure, as he
was

was a person for whom I felt a warm esteem, and being a sensible, agreeable man, I hoped his company and conversation would erase from my brother's mind the recollection of his former follies, which I thought still hung heavy on him.

My house was the constant rendezvous of persons of the first quality, whom we visited in the same manner. As I was not fond of going abroad, except on particular occasions, the major, or my brother were Mrs. Jeptson's escort to the places where she visited. Young Vainville was my constant companion in their absence. I often entreated him to accompany them, but he constantly refused, alleging his dislike to company,

H 3

espe-

especially such large parties as they were engaged in. I had been upwards of two years married, during which time I enjoyed an uninterrupted course of happiness. I had every reason to be satisfied with my wife's conduct and affection for me; for, tho' she had full command of my fortune, and the means of procuring every expensive folly, which is but too apt to hurry young minds into extravagance, and from the object that provided them, it never abated her desire of pleasing, and paying me every proper attention.

Whilst I was in full enjoyment of this state of happiness, Cranmer, my steward, expressed his surprise, that I never visited S—— Wood,
part

part of the estate which came by my mother. He drew a picture of the spot, which excited my curiosity, and I resolved to go down and gratify it, without acquainting any person with my intention, designing, if it was equal to the description Cranmer had given me, to prepare every thing for the family's reception, that the surprise should be more agreeable. I accordingly set out, attended by Cranmer, who, on my arrival, led me delighted thro' the demesne. I enquired why he did not inform me before of my being master of such an enchanting place. He replied, that it had never been much occupied by the owners; that my grandfather purchased it, for its being a pretty romantic spot; and,

to render it more so, he gave orders for a number of trees to be planted, intermixed with the others, and a house to be built. When this was done, continued Cranmer, he desired my father, who was then steward, to visit it once a year, and make improvements as they were necessary. He was going to England to visit his wife's relations, and desired him to inform him, from time to time, how it improved. My father followed his instructions as nearly as possible, and omitted nothing that could add to its beauty. He received answers every year from your grandfather, who still said he would be over the following spring, and ordered him not to make the place public. Twelve years passed over,
at

at the expiration of which period he arrived, accompanied by his lady and son, a lad of fourteen. Soon after his arrival, he visited this place, and was delighted with its improvements. After giving some necessary orders for the reception of his lady, he went to town, and returned with her in three weeks. She was in raptures at the first view, declared it was enchantment, and vowed she would pass the remainder of her days there. Her husband laughed at her exclamations of pleasure and surprise, and was much pleased that she approved of it, for the business of his life was planning scenes to promote her happiness. He had then no idea of her prophecy being fulfilled, and that what he designed

for her amusement should be cause of her death. They brought down several servants, with a design to pass the remainder of the season there. Your grandfather having an unexpected call to town, requested his lady to accompany him; but she would not listen to him, for her sole pleasure was in ranging about, being never easy indoors. The garden had been laid out the year before, and was remarkably beautiful; there were some plants of which she was particularly careful; and would amuse herself with pruning and watering them. She employed herself in this manner one day when the air was remarkably damp; and tho' her husband remonstrated on the consequences, she only laughed at his fears,

fears, and was deaf to his solicitations, and continued in the garden a considerable time. The next day she spoke hoarse, but would not own that any thing was the matter until towards evening, when she complained of a fore throat, and spoke so thick as to be scarcely understood. Your grandfather was about to set off to town for a physician, but she strenuously opposed it, said she was sure of being well next day, and would on no account suffer him to leave her. She continued very ill during the night, and towards morning fell into strong convulsions, which continued several hours, and departed at six o'clock in the morning.

It

It would be impossible to describe her husband's distress. He raved, and wept, and execrated himself for bringing her there; then ordering the carriage, he threw himself into it, and was drove to town in a state little short of distraction. He was met by his son on his entrance, who eagerly enquired for his mother. His father was unable to answer him, but sunk into a chair in an agony of grief. The young gentleman was struck with terror at his father's sorrow, and unable to account for it; but he soon learned the fatal cause from the servants, which threw him into the same state with his father. They indulged each other in affliction; as both their tears fell from the same source,

source, it was some time before either was composed enough to comfort the other. The father first perceived that it was wrong to give way to the sorrow that oppressed them; his fears for the health of his son, who was a delicate youth, of great sensibility, roused him from the stupor of grief he was absorbed in. As the young gentleman's spirits were much affected, he designed to travel. They accordingly took shipping for England, where he had left a daughter, and intended to bring her home on his return; but an Irish gentleman happening to see and fall in love with her, soon after his arrival, he consented to the match, as it suited the young lady's inclinations.

Soon

He remained two years in England, and on his return, his son requested leave to pay a visit to S— Wood, which being granted, he came down here. I was at that time a boy, and lived here with my father. The young gentleman took much notice of me, and often made me the companion of his walks. When he was here some time, he sent to town for his books, which were immediately sent him. Being naturally of a melancholy turn, the solitariness of this place agreed with his temper, but not so with his health, for it visibly declined. When his father got intimation of it, he came down for him; being much shocked at his appearance, he hurried immediately to town, where having

ing called on several physicians, they gave their opinion, that he was in imminent danger. They administered every restorative, but to no effect; he had fallen into a rapid decline, which was beyond the power of medicine to cure. His father's grief on his death is not to be described; he would admit of no consolation, and in a short time after his son, paid his debt to nature.

His estates fell to your mother, who at that time resided in Ireland. My father, continued Cranmer, died a short time before our old master; I was continued in his employ. As I passed most of my time here from my infancy, all I could spare from my other business I spent

I spent here. As it every year improves in beauty, I thought it strange that you never visited it, for I never had an idea of your being unacquainted with it. Here he ended his narration. I traversed the gardens with delight, examined the house, and finding it in exact repair, took a survey of the moveables, and setting down every thing that should be wanting, gave a list of them to Cranmer, with orders to provide them immediately, and set off for town. On my arrival, I perceived a gloom on young Vainville's countenance I knew not how to account for; I questioned him several times concerning it, but received no satisfactory answer. I began to think his pensiveness might proceed from his not having
any

any certain provision made for him; and wishing to dispel his uneasiness on that head, I spoke to my wife concerning the manner I should provide for him. She said her family were already under vast obligations to me: that for his part, he was a dull, plodding wretch, that would never make a gentleman, and the best thing I could do was, to get letters of recommendation for him, and send him to the West Indies. I was not a little surprised at the slighting manner she spoke of him, but took no notice of it.

Two days previous to that on which I designed to carry them to S—— Wood, as I sat in a back parlour, I observed young Vainville

ville walking backwards and forwards in the garden, seemingly much disturbed. As he was near the window, I tapped at the glass, and beckoned him to come in. He advanced, but slowly. Observing his tardiness, I advanced to meet him, and taking his hand as he entered, said—Lewis, I insist on being made acquainted with the cause of your uneasiness. I have lately observed something unusually heavy on your spirits. If it be in my power, or that of my fortune to remove it, speak freely, and be assured that nothing shall be omitted, that will contribute to dispel your uneasiness. He made no answer, but turning from me, burst into tears.—You amaze me, cried I, still holding him; from what source

source do your tears flow? Speak, and remove the anxiety I feel to be made acquainted with the cause; surely it is not of such a nature as to admit of no consolation.—Spare me, I beseech you, answered he, in a broken voice, nor ask me to impart what must render your future life miserable: it would be an ill requital for the innumerable favours I have already received from your hand; too soon will you know it, without my being the detested informer.—I cannot be more alarmed than your discourse has made me, answered I; keep me then no longer in suspense; if I must be wretched, my misery is already begun, by the presentiment you have raised. The concern that is visible in your countenance, assures

fures me, that you have no share in destroying of my peace. Fear not any diminution of my friendship, or esteem, but candidly disclose this dreadful secret; I am prepared for the worst.—Dreadful, indeed, for me to tell! he replied; but I can be no longer silent. Your generosity has overwhelmed me with shame, from a consciousness of the unworthiness of the objects who are partakers of it. Your ungrateful wife is——. Here he stopt, as if unable to proceed.—My wife! I exclaimed, almost breathless; what is it you would insinuate!—That she is unworthy of the name, he replied; she is the vilest of women!—Lewis, answered I, calmly, I love your sister; she is inexpressibly dear to me:
be

be careful therefore how you advance any thing to her disadvantage; for my swiftest vengeance shall pursue whoever wrongs her by unjust suspicions.—Ah! would to heaven it was confined to suspicions! I have long had strong proofs of her guilt and your dishonour; shame kept me silent—shame for the baseness and ingratitude of the most worthless of her sex! I had taken a resolution to quit your house, and leave it to time, or chance to undeceive you. More he might have said, but I heard it not. Whilst he spoke, a cold dew overspread my face, my head grew light, and I fell senseless on the ground. He recovered me, by rubbing my temples, and having led me to a chair, hung over me,

me, the anguish of his heart painted in his countenance. When I had gained strength to speak, I desired to know to whom else I was indebted for my dishonour.—I fear I have gone too far, by the effect it has had on you, said he.—Oh ! speak I conjure you, cried I ; suspense is worse than certainty. Tell me the villain's name, who has destroyed my peace for ever !—I ought not to be more tender of him than of my sister, he replied ; yet I feel a stronger repugnance to naming your brother ; he is the usurper who has seduced your wife's affections, and rendered her the most perfidious of her sex.—My brother !—I exclaimed—my brother the defiler of my bed ! gracious God ! do you permit such

such to live, and persist in iniquity ? Oh ! where is thy justice ? I burst into tears, and continued to rave and accuse my Maker. Vainville, tho' almost suffocated in tears, endeavoured to calm me. He represented how unavailing and unmanly complaints were, when I should think of some method of detecting and punishing the murderer of my peace. This roused me—To the farthest verge of the earth shall my vengeance pursue them, said I, starting up, and going towards the door. Vainville laid hold of my arm—And in what manner do you propose to take it ? said he ; my sister's crocodile tears and protestations of innocence, will work on your gentle nature, and you'll think it impossible she can be guilty ;

guilty; whilst your dissembling brother, with subtle arguments, will reason you out of your suspicions. Depend not on my words; have ocular proofs of their guilt, before you give resentment scope, and deliberately take measures for punishing them. Distracted as my mind was, I could see he was in the right; I sat down, and promised to be wholly guided by him. When I grew composed, we both joined the company in the drawing-room; my brother was leaning on the back of my wife's chair as I entered. My presence did not disconcert him, for he continued there a considerable time. I observed them narrowly, and remarked many whispers and significant glances pass between them

security

rity rendered them imprudent, for a person with a small share of discernment might have discovered their mystery. My brain fired, and lest I should not be able to govern my temper, I abruptly quitted the room. Young Vainville followed me into the garden.—I perceived the agitation of your mind, said he, and was afraid you would be observed by your wife and brother, which, by putting them on their guard, would deprive you of the means of detecting them. They are at present perfectly secure, that their intrigue is a secret to all but the major. As you are to carry them to S—— Wood the day after to-morrow, you cannot chuse a more proper time for confounding them; plead some indispen-

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ible business, that will delay and take you out of town for some days ; I will secrete you in my apartment, which is next but one to my sister's ; and then you will be convinced whether my suspicions be justly founded or not. This seemed a most eligible plan, and I immediately agreed to it.

The next morning I told my wife, that it would be impossible for me to bring her to S—— Wood at the time appointed ; that an unforeseen event would detain me a few days longer. She affected to be disappointed, and said she was impatient to be there. I made preparations, as if for a journey, and took a servant with me, whom I sent with directions to Cranmer.

I rode

I rode but a few miles, when I returned, and met Lewis at a tavern we had appointed to meet. We dined together. He gave me a full account of the cause of his suspicions: they were too clear to admit a doubt of their guilt. I longed for, yet dreaded, the fatal moment that was to confirm it.

When night came on, we proceeded home. Lewis was let in by a servant; I waited a quarter of an hour before he had an opportunity of coming to the door. When I got up to his apartment, he told me there was no company: that the major and my wife were at cards; as supper had been ordered, he supposed they intended to re-

tire soon : he then left me and went down stairs.

The anguish of my mind, when I was left alone, cannot be described. My brother's former conduct presented itself to my view ; I felt myself a dupe to his artifice ; but my wife's perfidy was the stab that wounded my soul. I had raised her family almost from beggary, and placed her in a situation far beyond her most sanguine expectations ; every indulgence that a tender husband could bestow, was lavished on her, and to be thus rewarded was sufficient to drive reason from her throne : I wept like a child. Vainville found me in this state when he entered ; he sat down without speaking, and leaned his

his head on a table. A few minutes after I heard my wife enter her apartment. Her maid and she continued talking some time; she at length dismissed her. Silence now reigned for the space of ten minutes; I was going to say something to Lewis, when I heard two people ascend the staircase; they were speaking to each other all the way up, but so softly I could not distinguish what they said. As they passed by the room where I sat, one of them, who, by his voice, I knew to be the major, wished his companion good night, and went on; the other person entered my wife's apartment. My feelings can only be imagined by a person who has been in a similar situation. My first thought, in

spite of the calmness I had endeavoured to assume, was, to pistol them both; but my nature instantly recoiled at the idea of embreuing my hands in their blood. I took up a candle, and beckoning to Lewis to follow me, proceeded to my wife's apartment. I opened the door, and the first object that struck my sight on my entrance was my brother, sitting by the side of the bed undressing. He started up instantly on seeing me, and flying over to the other side of the room, seized a pair of pistols, which I always kept there loaded, and turning to Lewis, who followed him close in order to prevent his design, discharged one of them in his face: he instantly fell. My brother then made towards the door,

door, and passing me, discharged the other pistol, and flew down stairs. I made no attempt to stop him; indeed I was utterly incapable of it, my soul being petrified with horror at the scene before me. I stood motionless over the body of Lewis, until the family, who were roused by the noise of the pistols, entered the apartment. The major was foremost, horror painted on his ghastly countenance.—Behold, said I, pointing to his brother, what the hand of thy murdering confederate has done!—May perdition seize the stripling, he replied; he has met the fate he merited; and may all traitorous, meddling puppies get the same! Then walking over to his sister, and taking her hand, desired an explanation of

what he saw.—I can give none, she replied, but suppose Mr. Jeptson and Lewis had a dispute, which they came hither to settle; for shortly after I went to bed, they both entered, and each taking a pistol, fired at the other. I was so amazed at the undaunted assurance of my infamous wife, that I stood motionless, and unable to utter a syllable. The major, turning to the servants, desired them to secure me. Seeing that none stirred to obey his orders, he asked, in a sharp tone, what they were about; did they mean to let a murderer escape?—I fear he has escaped, answered one of them, for I met him on the stairs as I came up; and you see, continued he, advancing to the bed-side, and taking
ing

ing up my brother's coat and shoes; he has left part of his dress behind. I have long known how my master has been abused, but the love I bore to that dear murdered youth prevented me from revealing it; fearing, as his whole dependance was on my master, he would withdraw his protection from him, it being natural to suppose he would cast off every individual of a family from whom he had received such wrongs.

Several of the servants now left the room to go in search of my brother; I grew faint with loss of blood, for I had received a wound in my shoulder, and, in attempting to walk over to a chair, fell on the ground. When I recovered from

the fit, I found myself laid in bed, and a surgeon preparing to dress my wound. The operation being finished, I called to William, the servant before-mentioned, and demanded of him how things were situated. He informed me, that as soon as Mrs. Jeptson saw me fall, she started out of bed, and hurrying on her clothes as fast as possible, quitted the house, no one attempting to stop her: that the major, after charging the servants not to mention the manner I received my wound, sent for a surgeon, as he was apprehensive it was dangerous, and that he and the surgeon were then conversing in the next room: that he had orders not to answer any questions I should ask him, on pretence that
speaking

speaking would prejudice my health. I promised him, continued William, lest he should place some other person about you, that would have you less at heart, and keep you ignorant of what was going forward; I heard the surgeon tell him your wound was not dangerous, and you might venture abroad in a day or two.

When I heard this, I determined to rise, as I judged if I staid in bed, there would be more scenes of treachery plaid upon me. I accordingly desired William to dress me, and had scarcely finished, when the major entered the room. His surprise, on seeing me walk about the room, was visible; he stood silent a few seconds, and observing
I took

I took no notice of him, exclaimed —What rashness is this! have you no fears for your health?— Yes, answered I, fears for my health and safety induced me to rise, to prevent, if possible, the further progress of villainy. I desire that you, sir, will take yourself instantly out of my house; accursed be the hour you first entered it! go to your colleagues in iniquity; inform them, that I still live to revenge the injuries I have received; and to the latest hour I draw breath will I pursue with vengeance the murderers of my beloved Vainville. I turned to William, and desired him to see the villain out of the house. He made no answer, but immediately departed. I gave orders that he should never again be admitted;

admitted, and dismissing William, traversed the room in an agony of mind not to be described. My mind was a perfect chaos; for my imagination was so bewildered, I could not properly say it dwelt on any thing.

Fatigue, at length, obliged me to think of rest. I flung myself on the bed and fell asleep. I had not been long down when I was awaked by William, who told me the surgeon waited.—He was much surprised at finding me sleeping in my clothes, and was apprehensive of the worst consequence. I was again stripped and put to bed: my arm grew painful, which, joined to the agitation my mind underwent, threw me into a fever,
under

under which I languished three weeks, being most of the time delirious. At the end of that period I began to give hopes of amendment; yet, I recovered but slowly. As the pain of my body decreased, those of my mind augmented. Cruel recollection obtruded in spite of my efforts against it, and rendered me miserable. When I reflected on my past life I despised myself for simplicity. All those to whom I had shewn any particular kindness, rewarded me with the blackest ingratitude, one alone excepted, who had paid his life a forfeit for his integrity.

What business have I then in a world, I exclaimed, where a brother, for whom I risked my life,
and

and exerted every fraternal effort to preserve from beggary and shame; and a wife, who enjoyed every blessing by my means, and on whom my soul doated, deceived me: I will retire from this scene, where I have experienced such accumulated woes, and bid an eternal adieu to a world that merits my utmost hatred and contempt.

Having formed this design, my mind became somewhat more composed, and I ventured to enquire of William what he knew of my infamous wife? He said he was informed that my brother and she had fled to Portugal. I was glad to hear they were at a distance from me; the time I had for reflection
had

had calmed my spirits, and diverted me of the desire I had to be revenged. I now only felt pity for their perseverance in guilt.

When I was sufficiently recovered to take a journey, William, who knew of my intention to exclude myself intirely from the world, requested to accompany me, and he being a long, tried, faithful servant, I agreed with pleasure to his request.

When I got here, I sent Cranmer to town to sell the house, moveables, &c. and discharge the servants. About four years ago I received a letter by means of Cranmer, which gave an account of my unfortunate wife, there was
one

one inclosed in it from herself, which awakened all my woes. It had been written some time after she had entered a convent. She bewailed her misfortunes and guilt most pathetically. Intreated my forgiveness in the most moving terms for the wrong she had done me ; declared from the fatal night on which I had discovered her guilt, her life had been one scene of accumulated misery. She accused the major as the first instigator of her crimes : but as she had entered a place where, she hoped, by repentance, to regain that peace she had forfeited by her guilty conduct, he had her pardon, to which she entreated I would add mine, as he was no longer of this world, being killed in a duel some time before.

Much

Much as I felt on reading this letter, it was some degree of consolation to know she had repented of her crimes. I shed tears over it. Her moving expressions of contrition and prayers for my forgiveness, melted me into tenderness, and subdued my resentment. It was some time before I recovered my former composure.—At length my mind became more calm than it had been hitherto. I looked forward with delight to that period, when I should receive the reward of my long sufferings. It is now two years since I have enjoyed an uninterrupted scene of repose. The spot I have chosen, has, in some degree, contributed to the restoration of my peace, and gives me an idea of the future state of
bliss.

bliss. No person has as yet explored the recesses of this labyrinth——Should fate direct hither any stranger whom misfortune has been brief with, here let him fix his residence. Remote from the noise of a bustling world, he will have liberty to contemplate on the intricate mazes of providence, which having led him thro' toils, danger, and difficulties, at length conducted him to a peaceful retreat.

After having reflected some time on what I had been reading, I arose and sought Mr. Jeptson. He saw me enter the garden, and approached me. My countenance betrayed my inward sensation. I beheld him with reverence and pity.

ty. He took my hand,—I perceive my friend, said he, your intention—you would speak comfort, your countenance bears every mark of the tenderest sensibility; but I will hear nothing. I wish not to revive a subject that should be buried in oblivion. I bowed. As the day was pretty far advanced, I told him I must think of returning, but that I would shortly come and take up my residence entirely with him. After assuring me that nothing could give him greater happiness, we parted.

Cranmer led me thro' the same path we had traversed the day before. I told him I would throw a note over the ha-ha the day before I designed to come, with directions
where

where to meet me in town. When I arrived at the castle, they asked me many questions concerning the gentleman I had been visiting; but receiving vague answers to their questions, they desisted. How ill did their noisy mirth sound after the tranquil scene I had quitted, tho' I could never truly say their conversation was agreeable to me, yet, they appeared quite different beings to what I now considered them: their converse became hateful to me, and I resolved to quit a place which afforded me no satisfaction; and take up my abode in Jeptson's peaceful retreat, where I should not be stunned with noise, or persecuted with ill-timed wit; for they used to rally me most unmercifully on my gravity, and refusing

fusing to make one at their bacchanalian revels. I accordingly told Liffurges that I designed to travel, and must leave him immediately, as I had appointed to meet a gentleman in town that was to accompany me. He seemed sorry to part with me, and used many intreaties to prevail on me to stay some time longer. I returned him my warmest thanks for his civility, but assured him it was impossible; and having thrown the promised note over the ha-ha, I set off for town next morning, and arrived about one o'clock. I discharged my servant, and waited Cranmer's coming. It was late when he arrived; and having some business to transact, we delayed our journey until next morning.

We

We met Mr. Jeptson at the entrance of the wood, waiting our coming with impatience.—Welcome, my friends, said he, as he advanced, with open arms to receive me, your presence brings a joy to my heart, which I once thought it would be incapable of receiving. I returned this kind greeting in the warmest terms, and entered an arbor, where I hoped to enjoy my hours calm and undisturbed. Nor was I mistaken: the conversation of this rational and tender friend obliterated many painful and disagreeable ideas from my mind.

We passed our time in reading, walking, or conversing on the vicissitudes of our past lives. He
had

had no clearer conception than I of Lady Gertrude's behaviour, her conduct was puzzling to the greatest degree, and intirely past our comprehensions.

When the winter approached, he requested I would go to town and partake of some of the amusements it afforded. This I objected to, and assured him with truth, that no amusement would compensate for the loss of his society. I passed eight years in this retirement without once regretting the change I had made. I had much reason to rejoice, as it gave me an opportunity of paying that duty and attention to my Maker which is so much neglected in the great world, where every little object,
be

be it ever so insignificant, alloys the mind, and weans it from the contemplation of the omnipotent.

About this time Mr. Jeptson began to decline in health. I perceived the alteration with heart-felt anxiety. This worthy man merited the tenderest affection and attention from me, and I paid it him with unremitting assiduity.

Cranmer went to town every week, to an eminent physician, with an account of his complaint, and brought down medicines which were administered to him with the utmost care. He had intervals of ease for the first two years, but the latter part of his life was an

uniform scene of pain and infirmity, which he bore with true christian fortitude. He at length became so weak as not to admit of the slightest movement of his body, and lingered three weeks in this truly miserable and affecting situation. On the morning of the day he died, he called for me with more strength than I thought him capable of. I was sitting in a distant part of the room, and immediately got up and stood by his bed-side. He stretched out his feeble hand, and grasped mine, which I held over to him. He continued to look at me a considerable time without speaking: he at length broke silence.—With my last breath, my dear and valued friend, said he, permit me to
thank

thank you for your unremitting care and attention to me. Your kindness has softened the last stage of my life, and awakened the gratitude that was due to my Creator for the blessings I enjoyed in your society. I knew it would be needless to intreat you to leave me whilst life animated my frame, and therefore forbore to urge what, tho' it pained you, you would refuse. The thread is just broken which tied you to this spot. I request when I am no more, that you will leave it for some time, try how the converse of the world will agree with you, after being so long separated from it. I would farther advise you to visit England. I am too well acquainted with the steadiness of your nature not to

know that the image of your Gertrude is still dear to you. Make one attempt more to see her.—

From the account you have given me of her manners and temper, I imagine some ill-minded person, an enemy to both, has wrought this misunderstanding between you. I would have acquainted you with this supposition before, but I feared to make a conflict in your mind 'twixt love and friendship ; for I am sensible however strongly the former would impel you to go, the latter would prevent you. I have now nothing to add, but my prayers to the Supreme Power, to grant you that happiness you so truly deserve.

Here

Here my valued friend ended, after undergoing many struggles whilst he was speaking. It is needless to repeat the agitation his discourse threw me into, to find myself next to heaven, in his thoughts, at the very moment I was going to lose him for ever, was too much for me to sustain. I quitted him abruptly, to give free vent to my tears, which I could not restrain. When I became more composed, I again came to him; his countenance had assumed an air of heavenly serenity. Looking up in my face, he exclaimed in a weak voice;—"Farewel, my beloved Hastings; heaven has been peculiarly kind to me in granting me such a friend. I saw your struggles to hide your concern.—I do

now wish you should forget me ; but do not murmur against the will of the Almighty. Think I go to enjoy perfect happiness in his presence, and let that thought reconcile you to the parting.—We shall meet again, never to be divided.” I endeavoured, whilst he was speaking, to appear composed.—Yes, said I, we shall meet again ; and I hope shortly. I leaned over him, and took his hand—he endeavoured to press mine, but the pressure was weak : his faculties were sinking—he attempted to speak, but the power was denied him—it was past—he closed his eyes for ever.

When I was sensible he no longer existed, I grew loud in my exclamations

clamations of grief, and flung myself on his lifeless body in an agony not to be described. I had lost my companion, my friend—Oh! I exclaimed! why am I doomed to continue in this now hateful world.—Ah, make intercession with that friend thou hast e'er now joined, that I may speedily be permitted to follow thee!

In this manner I passed the most part of the day. William staid with his hands clasped over the body of his master, and never offered to disturb me. Cranmer, who had gone to town early that morning, on his return found things as I have described. He stood for some time without speaking; then raising me, who was

grown insensible by leaning over the dead body of my friend, he led me into another room.—Alas ! fir, said he, how unavailing is this affliction ! the will of heaven is fulfilled ; submit with patience to the decree, and murmur not. Your friend is in the abode of the blessed ; let that consideration help to make you bear his loss with resignation.

The tears ran plentifully down his cheeks as he spoke ; he endeavoured to wipe them off unperceived.—Shall this man outdo me in firmness, thought I ; he is no less afflicted, and yet he endeavoured to conquer his feelings. I arose and took his hand.—Cramer, we have lost our friend, partners

ners in sorrow; let us be to each other what he was to both. I here make you an offer of my friendship, and look upon me here after as one that shall concern himself in whatever good or ill shall befall you.—I should ill profit by the example my honoured and never to be forgotten master set me, answered he, if I did not accept with joy the offer you make me. Your friendship was the chiefest good he boasted; how blind must I be not to receive pleasure from the same source? Behold in me a willing servant, ready to attend your footsteps to the verge of the earth. In saying this, he raised my hand to his lips and retired.

When I was left to myself, a violent flood of tears fell from my eyes, which in some degree lightened the impression I felt on my spirits. Cranmer returned in half an hour, and with much intreaty prevailed on me to go to bed—the fatigue of body and mind I had undergone for several days before, operated so as to throw me into a profound sleep, from which I did not awake until next morning. When I arose I proceeded to the room which contained the remains of my friend. Cranmer was standing by the corpse.—Come, said he, as I entered, take a last farewell ere you part for ever. Remember how he bore the heaviest of ills, and let his example teach
you

you to bear his loss with firmness.

The next day we committed his body to the earth, and shed a deluge of tears over it;—they were the tears of gratitude, and defiled not his ashes.

In a few days I opened his will in the presence of my two friends. He had bequeathed to each of them five hundred pounds, and made me sole heir to upwards of seventy thousand pounds, besides S—— Wood. The next day I called William into the library, and taking notes to the amount of one thousand pounds, put them into his hand. He received them with a disordered countenance, and without

out speaking. I was at a loss how to account for his behaviour, and asked him why he seemed so dissatisfied. If you do not think that sufficient, said I, speak freely, I'll do any thing in my power to give you satisfaction.—Ah! spare me, sir, I beseech you, said he, catching hold of my arm as I advanced towards the bureau, do not think me so avaricious: I want not riches. The embarrassment you perceive in my countenance, proceeded from a dread I entertained of your dismissing me. As nothing would be a compensation for being deprived of the happiness of serving you, I intreat you to take back these notes, which have already rendered me wretched, by making me no longer your dependent.

The

The worthy fellow's gratitude affected me; I shook him heartily by the hand, and assured him nothing was farther from my intention than parting with him: his long attachment to my departed friend was a thoro' conviction of his integrity; but 'twas fit he should be left to his own choice, by making him independent. I shall not go about to describe the poor fellow's joy and gratitude on this assurance; suffice it to say, he was perfectly content.

I now prepared to follow my friend's directions; and accordingly set forward for town, attended by William. On the second day of my travels, as I set up at an inn where I designed to pass the night,
a gentle-

a gentleman, attended by one servant, rode into the yard; he gave some directions to his servant, and then accosted me politely; requested as we were fellow-travellers, we might pass the evening together. I acquiesced, and before the evening was over, was happy that I did so, he being an intelligent and agreeable man. The next day we set forward together. During the course of the day, he told me he had been on a visit to an uncle to whom he was heir; that he had been married near two years to the most amiable of her sex, and the greatest heiress in France; but I being a younger brother, (continued he) and not in circumstances to demand her of her guardian, (who was also her uncle) we agreed to marry

marry privately, and live concealed until my uncle's death affords me an opportunity of declaring it, and convincing the world I had no mercenary motive in marrying the idol of my soul. We conducted matters so secretly, that, tho' there are no two families in France more universally known, yet there is not the slightest surmise of our being married.

He intreated I would favour him with my company for a few days at his villa, which was but a few miles from Paris, as soon as I conveniently could after my arrival. When we came to the hotel, I wrote a letter to the Marquis de Revelles, to acquaint him with my arrival. It lay on a table some
time

time before William had an opportunity of sending it. As Mr. de St. Prue glanced his eyes over the direction, I observed he changed colour. I immediately asked him if he had any acquaintance with the marquis.—I will hide nothing from you, said he; the marquis is my wife's uncle. I know I run no risk in making you my confidant, as I have the strongest reliance on your honour and secrecy. I thanked him, and said, he might rely on both; and if he thought my intercession would have any weight towards a reconciliation, he might command my utmost influence. He was warm in his expressions of gratitude for my obliging offer, as he termed it, but forbore reaping any advantage for the reasons
before

before mentioned.—However, added he, I shall be impatient 'till I see you, that my Harriot may have an opportunity of returning thanks in person for the favor you designed her. At his repeated intreaties I promised to go to his villa next day. He then departed, and I dispatched the note to the marquis.

The first object that particularly attracted me on my entrance was Julia. My whole frame was affected in an unusual manner. For some time my attention was taken up in paying my compliments to the marquis and his lady, they introduced me to their son and daughter, and Miss Neville; she trembled when I saluted her; nor
was

was I much less confused. Good God! thought I, what can occasion these emotions? The exclamations of the family on our extreme likenesses to each other, raised hopes in my mind which I never entertained before. I examined her with the strictest attention, and thought some of her features, particularly her eyes, bore a resemblance to my dear Gertrude's.—It is impossible to describe the emotions this thought gave rise to. Her agitation was quite visible, and strengthened the hopes I began to entertain. Tho' I longed impatiently for an explanation, I saw the present time was highly improper. The marquis pressed so earnestly to make his house my home, that I consented, and took my leave early,

early, on purpose to give William directions concerning the baggage which I ordered to the marquis's. I slept that night at the hotel, on account of my engagement next morning to Mr. de St. Prue. I set out for his seat, with a design to return next day; but I was mistaken, for that gentleman would not permit me to leave him for several days, and I received so much civility from him and his amiable spouse, that I could not with any degree of propriety attempt it.

I received a severe shock on my return to town, to find that Miss Neville had not only left the marquis's, but the kingdom.

He

He then proceeded to inform us of his enquiries at the convent, and what had passed since his arrival in England until his meeting with me; all which I have transmitted to you in a former letter.

He received our thanks and congratulations with an easy politeness, peculiar to himself. Never were parent and child so delighted with each other, as he and Julia.

I have now given you a circumstantial account of each particular, and most heartily glad am I that the task is ended; for my fingers ach confoundedly; you are deeply indebted to me for
spending

spending so much time for your amusement.—I check my pen,
—I must not cancel the obligation by upbraiding you with it. Adieu.

C. MIDDLETON.

LET-

LETTER XL.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I AM heartily sorry for you, Frank, but could never have suspected, that a description only could have raised such emotions as you describe, in a breast so naturally cold as your worship's. I know not what would have become of you yesterday, had you seen the lovely Julia's additional glow, on the unexpected appearance of her lover.—Strange! you exclaim, arrived already?—Yes, my good friend; there is death to your hopes at once—no opportunity now of rivaling the count in her favour.

favour. His impatience would admit of no delay, but immediately on the receipt of Mr. Hastings's letter, entreated leave of his father to come to England. The old gentleman, pleased to find his son enflamed with the daughter of his friend, proposed accompanying him. You may guess their presence was very acceptable.

Mr. Hastings designs to go to France with them immediately after their marriage, and insists on my company; therefore if you have any inclination to take a personal farewell, muster your spirits and come to town directly, for I know not when I shall return, as we all design to pay a visit to honest Cranmer. Harriot Hallon had
a party

a party engaged to accompany us to the play last night, but the arrival of the marquis and count prevented us. We go to-night, and if any thing worth recital intervenes, I shall resume the pen on my return.

As I suspected, our box took up the attention of the house. Julia was visibly distressed at the attention of the gentlemen, who levelled their glasses at her without mercy. She complained to me, and said it was absolute rudeness. I told her it was always the case, when a new and beautiful object made her appearance: that she must expect to be so stared at whenever

whenever she appeared in public for some time. Our attention was called to the stage, where the admirable Siddons shone in Belvidera.

When the play was over, the ladies requested to go home. As soon as their intention was perceived, half the men in the house crowded to the box-room, in hopes of learning who she was. I was pestered to death by my acquaintance, who returned to their seats as wise as they came, for any information on my part. I am afraid they won't be treated with another view shortly, for Mr. Hastings is impatient to be gone. I beg you will not delay, but

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come

come instantly to town, and let me have the pleasure of introducing to my new friends, the earliest and best beloved. Adieu.

C. MIDDLETON.

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LETTER XLI.

FRANCIS MORDAUNT, ESQ. TO SIR EDWARD
MORDAUNT.

I ARRIVED here late yesterday evening. There was a large party in the drawing-room; I sent for Charles, who flew to welcome me, and insisted on my joining the company, which I would gladly be excused from on account of my dress. When I was announced, Mr. Hastings advanced to meet us. Sir Charles introduced us to each other. Elegant as the portrait was which my friend drew of him, it fell infinitely short of the original. I never beheld so elegant a figure: it is impossible

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to

to behold him without being interested in his favour. He joined us, and we ranged the room in search of Julia. We found her seated at cards with two ladies and the marquis ; the count leaned on the back of her chair. She was so intent on the game, that she did not perceive our approach. Charles tapped her on the shoulder—My friend Mordaunt, Julia. She flung down her cards, and paid her compliments with inimitable grace. It is impossible to convey to you an idea of her beauty. The count adores her, and well he may, for never did I behold such an amiable creature. He is a tall, well-formed young man, rather handsome than otherwise. His face is pale,

pale, but he has the finest pair of blue eyes I ever saw, and looks seduceingly soft when bent on Julia; he is extremely sensible, and seems of a domestic turn. She will undoubtedly be happy with a man of this cast, as it is plain she loves him.

The marquis, tho' last, not least beloved, is a most facetious old gentleman; has a happy knack at telling a story, an inexhaustible fund of good humour, and, on the whole, is an agreeable, entertaining companion.

I have now drawn a sketch of the inhabitants of this house; but it is impossible for my pen to do
them

them justice. The marriage takes place in a few days, when I must part with my dear Charles: he calls for me. Adieu.

F. MORDAUNT.

LET.

LETTER XLII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I HAVE just taken leave of my friend, I might add an s to the word, for the whole party warmly professed themselves such, and used many intreaties that I would accompany them. I excused myself at the present, but promised to join them in spring, before they set out for Italy. My spirits are lowered by parting with Charles. Harriot Hallon says I make a most dolorous appearance, and endeavours, by her lively fallies, to dispel the gloom that hangs over me; if I continue writing I shall infect you with my melancholy.

melancholy. I dine with Mrs. Hallon, from whence I write this, or I would set off immediately. To-morrow early I begin my journey, and you may expect me next day at dinner. Till then farewell.

F. MORDAUNT.

The End.